

U.S. out of Arab East!

Massive deployment to protect Big Oil

BY SAMAD SHARIF

Washington is deploying a massive military force in the Arabian Peninsula and the surrounding waters, threatening to unleash a war to place the proimperialist monarch of Kuwait back on his throne and to topple the government of Iraq. The Bush administration has ordered the U.S. military in the region to impose a blockade on Iraq, which, according to international law, is an act of war.

The Pentagon has already dispatched more than 20,000 troops to Saudi Arabia and has announced that the number will increase to 100,000 in the coming few weeks. Government contingency plans call for bringing U.S. troops in the region to a quarter of a million.

Transport planes carrying troops and equipment have been landing every 10 minutes at an unidentified base in Saudi Arabia. As marines from three Southern California bases were flown to Saudi Arabia, tons of weapons and equipment were on trucks and trains for the overland trip to East Coast ports for shipment to the Middle East.

The army's 101st Airborne Division based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, along with its attack and transport helicopters, continued to be deployed by air to the region. Units from the 82nd Airborne Division, air force F-16 fighter planes, and C-130 transport planes continue to arrive in Saudi Arabia from bases in the United States.

Preparation for deployment

The Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff have given notice to units to prepare for deployment to the Middle East. The alert says the military should be prepared to send the entire 101st Airborne Division, the rest of the 82nd Airborne, the entire 7th Division, and the entire III Armored Corps headquartered at Fort Hood, Texas.

Air force units on the list include three squadrons of F-16 fighters, nearly 100 A-10 planes used to attack tanks, two dozen F-117A Stealth fighters, a dozen AC-130 gunships, 18 F-111 bombers, and two dozen B-52G bombers. The list also includes a half dozen airborne command and control aircraft, a half dozen EF-111 jamming planes, and a large number of C-130 transport planes.

The Pentagon confirmed that air, land, and sea elements of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force from Camp Pendleton and from Twentynine Palms and El Toro Marine Corps bases in California have been dispatched to Saudi Arabia. A full expeditionary force can include up to 60,000 marines.

In addition, elements of the army's 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, with its Patriot surface-to-air missiles, are also being deployed to Saudi Arabia, according to military authorities. The 101st Airborne Division is equipped with hundreds of helicopters that can be used for rapid movements on the battlefield, ranging from the heavily armed AH-64 Apache attack helicopter to the UH-60 Blackhawk transport craft.

On August 14 the Bush administration said it is considering a partial mobilization of military reserve forces. The president has the authority to call up as many as 200,000 reservists.

The first U.S. casualty in the operation has already been reported by the Pentagon. Air Force Staff Sgt. John Champisi died on August 12 in Saudi Arabia as the result of an accident.

The U.S. warships in the region are organized into three aircraft carrier battle groups: the *Independence* group on station near the mouth of the Persian Gulf; the *Eisenhower*

group stationed in the Arabian Sea, having come from the Mediterranean through the Suez Canal; and the *Saratoga* group in the Mediterranean, which includes the battleship *Wisconsin*, armed with cruise missiles.

The Pentagon has decided to send a fourth group, *John F. Kennedy*, to build up the navy's already large armada in the region. The *Independence* and *Eisenhower* groups are each likely to include 86 combat aircraft, six fighting ships, a supply

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Socialist candidate condemns war moves

The following statement was issued August 15 by Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York Craig Gannon.

The massive military deployment by Washington in the Arab Peninsula is an assault on the Arab peoples — on their right to self-determination, national sovereignty, and control of their resources.

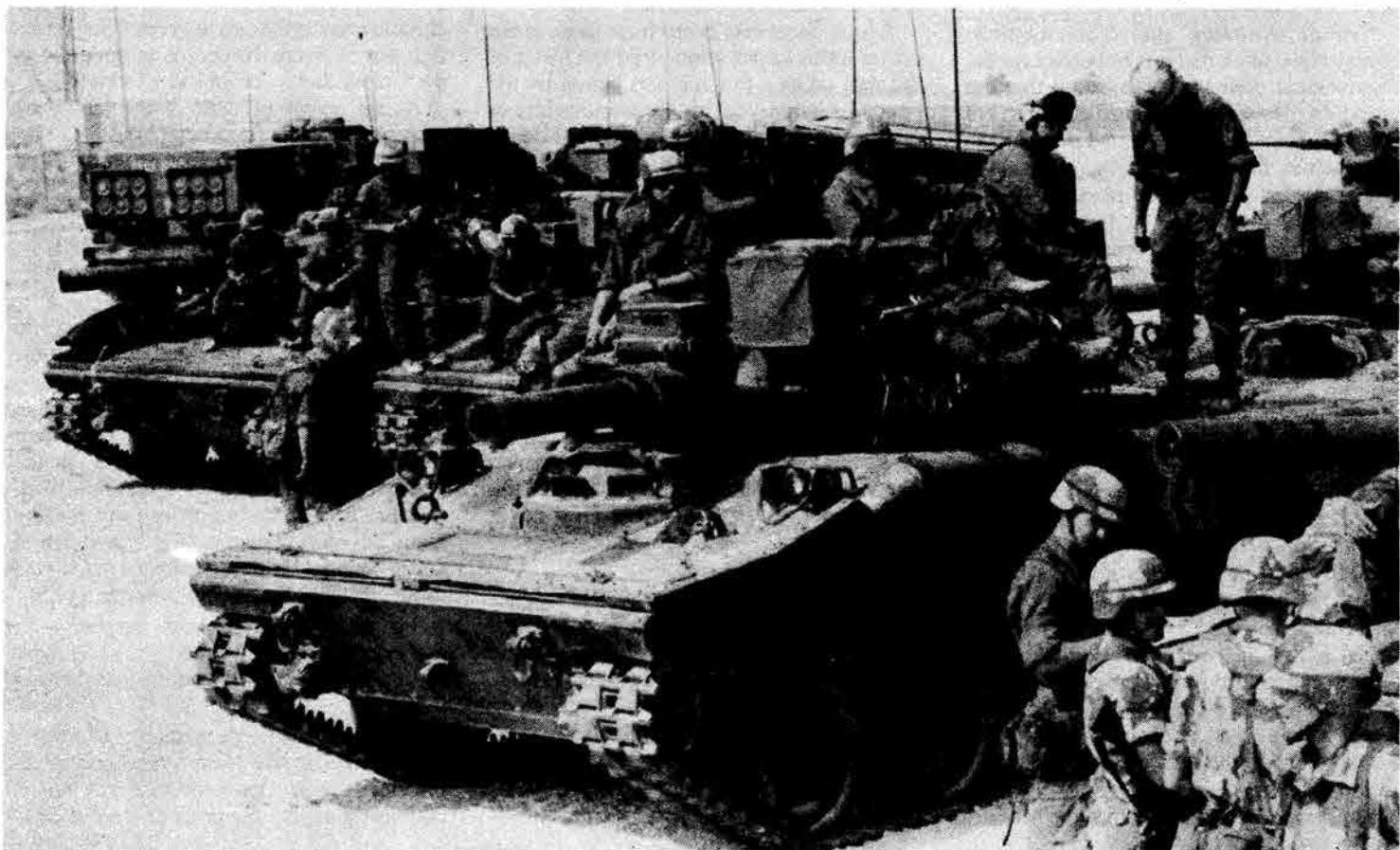
Working people in the United States should demand the U.S. forces be withdrawn, and that Washington and its allies end their

military blockade, economic sanctions, seizure of assets, and bullying of Iraq.

The 50 Socialist Workers Party candidates for public office across the United States add our voice to these demands. Our candidates include oil and chemical workers, coal miners, strikers at Eastern Airlines, and young people. We stand with the masses of the Arab peoples in their condemnation of this intervention.

In ordering the biggest military mobilization since the Vietnam War, President George

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Troops and weapons from U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division in Saudi Arabia on August 14. The mobilization is the largest since the Vietnam War and may escalate to as many as 250,000 troops.

Union-buster Lorenzo sells stock in Continental Airlines to SAS

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

"In the end, organized labor grounded high-flying Frank Lorenzo — the man its leaders had termed the Typhoid Mary of union-busting," was how reporters for USA Today put it.

On August 9 Lorenzo stepped down as chief executive of Continental Airlines Holdings Inc. and announced he was selling most of his stake in the holding company to Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS).

Hollis Harris, former president of Delta Air Lines, will become the company's new chief executive. He will replace Lorenzo when the deal closes in about 30 days. The government must approve the deal.

On the picket lines, jubilant Eastern strikers and their supporters celebrated Lorenzo's departure. In some areas their celebrations were joined by Continental workers. An Eastern strike supporter in Detroit reported that one Continental ramp worker walked up to the Machinists airport picket line and said, "The Great Satan is dead. Thank you."

In the labor movement Lorenzo's name

became synonymous with union-busting and was dubbed the most hated boss in the United States, as he strove to build a nonunion Texas Air empire.

In 1982 Lorenzo acquired Continental Airlines in a hostile takeover.

In 1983 Continental demanded huge concessions from its workers. Faced with a demand for a 40 percent wage cut and the elimination of 600 jobs, 2,000 members of the International Association of Machinists

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Curtis committee wins court delay in harassment suit probe

BY SANDRA NELSON
AND PRISCILLA SCHENK

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Mark Curtis Defense Committee won an important ruling in Iowa District Court August 13. Judge Arthur Gamble granted a motion by defense committee attorney Mark Bennett to delay until September testimony from Julia Terrell, the defense committee's treasurer.

Terrell was originally ordered to testify this month. The delay gives the committee and its

attorney an opportunity to defend the constitutional rights of its supporters and financial contributors. Bennett will seek a protective order to sharply limit unconstitutional intrusion into the committee's affairs and finances.

Curtis, a unionist and political activist, was framed up by Des Moines police on rape and burglary charges in 1988 and is currently serving a 25-year jail term in Fort Madison, Iowa. Keith and Denise Morris, parents of

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UN: Puerto Rico has right to self-determination

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

UNITED NATIONS, New York — The UN Special Committee on Decolonization voted on August 15 for a resolution presented by the Venezuelan delegation reaffirming Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and independence from U.S. colonial rule.

Prior to the vote on the resolution, Ricardo Alarcón, head of the Cuban delegation to the decolonization committee, announced Cuba would cosponsor the resolution.

The fact that Venezuela sponsored the resolution is significant, explained Olga Sanabria of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, since over the past several years it had abstained on the vote on similar resolutions.

The resolution calls for the case of Puerto Rico to remain on the UN agenda despite discussions under way in the U.S. Congress for a plebiscite on Puerto Rico's political status. In a vote to be held on the island, Puerto Ricans would face three options: retaining the current "commonwealth" colonial status, statehood, or independence.

Eight of the 24 nation members of the

decolonization committee voted for the resolution, including Iraq, which in the past had abstained on the vote. Norway was the only vote against. Among the 12 countries that abstained were Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Chile.

The decolonization committee passed the first such resolution in 1972 and has approved similar resolutions every year since 1978. The resolution was approved after two full days of testimony and petitions from more than 50 organizations.

The proposed plebiscite has sparked a broad debate among Puerto Ricans both on the island and in the United States. It has caused concern among defenders of Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and independence. They fear that winning broader international support will fall victim to the claim by the Bush administration that the plebiscite means the issue should no longer fall under the jurisdiction of the UN.

Since the end of the World War II millions around the world have broken free of colonial domination. Last March the people of Namibia

won their independence from the apartheid regime of South Africa after decades of bloody struggle.

In opening his remarks to the delegates of the decolonization committee, Juan Mari Bras, chairman of the Common Cause for Puerto Rican Independence, explained that "having resolved the problem of Namibia, with its declaration of independence that we celebrate as a great victory for humanity," the question of Puerto Rico's colonial subjugation by the United States becomes one of the most important questions before the decolonization committee.

By 1993 Puerto Rico will be in its 500th year of colonial rule, more than 400 of them under Spanish domination. For nearly a century, Puerto Ricans have lived under the boot of U.S. imperialism.

Luis Amauri Suarez, a member of the Federation of Labor of Puerto Rico, spoke for the Committee of Labor Organizations (COS). He noted the impact colonialism has had on the working people on the island and on those who have been forced to emigrate to the United States.

According to materials submitted for the delegate's consideration by COS, more than \$6 billion in profit annually accrue to U.S. corporations on the island and only a fraction are reinvested in Puerto Rico. At the same time, per capita income of Puerto Ricans is less than half the U.S. average.

Unemployment in the 1980s, the COS points out, averaged above 19 percent, more than at any time during the previous three decades. Other delegates explained how the chronic economic crisis in Puerto Rico drives four out of every 10 people to emigrate to the United States for jobs at a living wage.

At the center of most of the testimony presented was the proposed plebiscite.

Carlos Gallisá, secretary general of the

Puerto Rican Socialist Party, explained that the "Free Determination Law," — the name of the proposed U.S. legislation — "is a farce, a gibe at the right of free determination

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As we go to press . . .

In a unanimous decision August 16, the Federal Election Commission granted the Socialist Workers Party a new exemption under election law, affirming the party's right to withhold the names of financial contributors and recipients of payments from SWP federal election campaigns.

Last year the FEC took away the party's 1979 exemption from disclosing the names of its contributors and a 1985 exemption from disclosing the names of recipients of campaign funds.

The decision came in response to a request to restore the exemption submitted July 2 by attorney Edward Copeland. The request outlined the history of government and employer spying and disruption, as well as right-wing hostility against the SWP. Citing examples provided by Copeland, the FEC noted "there is a reasonable probability that compelled disclosure" of names of contributors and recipients "will subject them to threats, harassment, or reprisals from governmental or private sources."

The new exemption will last until Dec. 31, 1996 — through the next two presidential elections.

The full text of the FEC decision will be printed in next week's issue of the *Militant*.

Protest in New York demands Puerto Rico's independence

NEW YORK — Some 100 supporters of independence for Puerto Rico rallied at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza near the United Nations on August 15 to demand "Independence yes! Sham plebiscite no!"

"We are here today," said Nelson Ramírez, "because we think that it is important for the international community to know that the proposed plebiscite is a sham." Ramírez is a member of the Committee for Puerto Rican Affirmation, the sponsor of the rally.

The protest action took place while the UN Special Committee on Decolonization was meeting nearby to discuss a resolution reaffirming the right of Puerto Rico to self-determination.

"We believe that the struggle for Puerto Rican independence is part and parcel of the struggle of all people for independence and peace," said Rabab Habib, from the Committee for a Democratic Palestine.

"Now the United States is sending hundreds of thousands of troops to Saudi Arabia," Habib told the rally. "They say it's 'our' oil; but it's Arab oil. It belongs to us. Just the way that the island of Puerto Rico belongs to the Puerto Ricans."

"Workers in the United States have no stakes in the colonial oppression of Puerto Rico," said Selva Nebbia of the Socialist Workers Party. "We can and will be won over to support the just struggle of the Puerto Rican people to their self-determination."

Among the other speakers at the rally were, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos from the Machete

ters; Irving Flores, who spent 25 years in a U.S. jail as a political prisoner; Dora García, a political prisoner recently released from a U.S. prison; and José López from the National Liberation Movement.

A loud cheer was heard from those at the action when López announced the result of the vote taken a few minutes before by the Special Committee on Decolonization in favor of reaffirming the right of self-determination of Puerto Rico.

With this issue of the *Militant* the cover price and subscription rates have been increased. These raises are necessary to cover the printing, mailing, and shipping costs of subscriptions and bundles of the newspaper. These costs go up as the circulation of the *Militant* goes up and therefore must cover the real expense involved in order to avoid a growing deficit.

Much of the expenses involved in producing the *Militant* are impossible to cover with our small resources because of ever-growing costs — such as travel to get to where struggles are taking place — from South Africa to Panama — and other expenses.

And we don't plan to cut back on doing what must be done to get the facts on the battles of working people here and interna-

tional. We depend on our supporters to contribute to the *Militant* and help keep the presses running.

And unlike the big-business dailies we don't have millionaire backers who run their papers to make money — and present the news from the viewpoint of others like themselves. The *Militant* won't sell out for any fancy advertising contracts or bow down to some deep-pocketed contributor hoping to influence what we print — and don't print.

The *Militant* has only one purpose — to get out the truth and broad social analysis about the battles of the working class around the globe.

And to do this we depend on you: readers who appreciate the *Militant* and contribute financially to it. One important way this is done is by paying the price of what it costs

to get the *Militant* sent to you every week — whether you live in Des Moines, Iowa, or Paris, France.

The new cover price for the *Militant* is \$1.50. The new subscription rates are \$10 for an introductory 12 weeks, \$15 for a renewal subscription of 12 weeks, \$27 for six months, \$45 for one year, and \$80 for two years.

Perspectiva Mundial is also raising its prices with the next issue, to be printed on September 6. The cover price will be \$2.50 and the subscription rates will be \$6 for an introductory four months; \$10 for six months; \$17 for one year, and \$30 for two years.

As the circulation of these socialist publications grow, these prices will help put the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* on a sound footing financially for the big opportunities ahead.

'Militant' cover, subscription prices increase

BY RONI McCANN

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'The Militant was the only U.S. paper to take a real interest in our case, follow it through the trial, and write on our harsh conditions in jail. I'm sure many prisoners appreciate the *Militant*. Keep up the good work!'

RONI BEN EFRAT

One of four editors of *Way of the Spark* jailed in Israel for their solidarity with the Palestinian people. Another, Yacov Ben Efrat, is still imprisoned.

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California socialists launch campaign

'U.S. workers have no interest in Mideast war,' says gubernatorial candidate

BY TOBA SINGER

SACRAMENTO, California — Chevron oil refinery process operator and long-time leader of the Socialist Workers Party, Joel Britton, announced his campaign for governor of California by calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. warships from the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

"U.S. workers have no interest in a war in the Middle East to protect the profits of the big oil companies," Britton told an August 3 news conference on the capitol steps here. The news conference was held only a few hours after the first reports about Washington's response to the Iraqi government's move into Kuwait.

The following day, the *Daily Breeze*, a Los Angeles-area newspaper that covered the news conference, quoted Britton as advocating "a complete hands-off policy" for the United States in the Middle East. The article also listed Britton's statewide slate and mentioned his support for the Eastern Airlines strike. Britton is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 1-547 and works in El Segundo, an industrial area of Los Angeles.

Britton heads a ticket of SWP candidates from three California cities: Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland. Running are Diana Cantú, a longtime activist against U.S. intervention in Central America and supporter of the Cuban revolution, for lieutenant governor; John Landberg, an Amtrak locomotive engineer and member of the United Transportation Union, for attorney general; Pedro Vásquez, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, for secretary of state; Eli Green, a pipefitter and member of OCAW Local 1-128 at the Arco oil refinery in Wilmington, California, for insurance commissioner; Juan Villagómez, a student at California State University, Los Angeles, and member of the Young Socialist Alliance, for state treasurer; and Nell Wheeler-Martentis, an airport worker and leader of the Young Socialist Alliance, for controller.

Also running on the SWP ticket are candidates for U.S. Congress Mark Weddleton, a union garment worker and San Francisco organizer of the SWP; Eva Braiman, a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance; and Lisa Ahlberg, Los Angeles organizer of the SWP.

Socialist Workers Campaign '90 chairpeo-



Militant/Margrethe Siem



Militant/Yvonne Hayes



Militant

Left to right, California SWP candidates Joel Britton for governor, Diana Cantú for lieutenant governor, and Eli Green for insurance commissioner. They are part of slate of nine candidates in November elections.

ple are Mel Mason, Margaret Jayko, and Robin Maisel. Mason was the SWP's candidate for U.S. president in 1984 and Jayko is a former editor of the *Militant*. Maisel, an attorney in the Los Angeles area, has been active in the socialist movement for 25 years. Geoff Mirelowitz, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Los Angeles, is the statewide campaign director.

Britton hits budget cuts

The announcement of the socialist ticket comes in the wake of a bipartisan gutting of the state budget.

Britton stated that medical and social services will be cut while millions of California working people are without medical insurance, and funds available for people with AIDS are grossly insufficient. The budget cuts — along with the bank crisis and new regressive taxes supported by both Democratic and Republican party politicians — hit working people hardest.

The socialist candidate pointed out that 70 percent of the savings and loan bank fraud has taken place in California, where workers are expected to pay for the state's budget crisis, while the rich, who have stolen or squandered hundreds of millions, are let off the hook.

Britton called for the formation of a labor party where workers can "band together in their own interests to win control over their lives, wages, working and social conditions, and press for their own international policy based on solidarity." A labor party's foreign policy of international solidarity, he said, would fully support the South African freedom struggle, normalization of relations between Washington and Cuba, and would demand "Hands off the Middle East."

"Based on an aroused and fighting labor movement," Britton continued, "and heartened by the miners' victory at Pittston Coal, the gaining struggle of Eastern Airlines workers, and the continuing strike against Greyhound, a labor party would put the interests of working people first, instead of profits."

Britton also attacked Operation Green Sweep, a recent U.S. Army and California National Guard action that used troops and helicopters against alleged marijuana growers in Humboldt County.

"The war against drugs is a phony excuse to restrict the democratic rights of working people. It cynically manipulates a social crisis that the capitalists themselves created. The drug scourge will be eliminated by workers organizing on their own behalf — as they

are now doing at Eastern Airlines and Greyhound. The 'war on drugs' seeks only to legitimize increased U.S. military intervention in the countries of Peru, Mexico, Panama, and Colombia."

Eastern Europe

Asked by reporters to comment on the recent developments in Eastern Europe, Britton explained that Washington "has not won the Cold War as it claims." Instead, "imperialism is actually weaker today."

"Workers are acting in their own interests to decide their destiny," Britton said. "They have toppled the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe. The privileged castes that have ruled under the banner of Marx and Lenin have carried out a travesty of Marxism and Leninism, resulting in decades of collaboration with imperialism, antiworker brutality, undemocratic practices, and gross mismanagement of goods and services."

"Today, workers in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe join hundreds of millions of others from South Africa to the West Virginia coalfields who will determine their destiny in the course of their struggle."

"Regardless of their current opinions or consciousness on one question or another," the socialist candidate said, "this struggle will lead them to Marxist solutions — the real ones — not those represented by the false icons of Marxism, which are being rightfully torn down across the whole of Eastern Europe today."

"Economists predict that unemployment must reach 40 percent in order for 'market mechanisms' to work under *perestroika*. Soviet workers won't stand for that. To them a job is a basic right. They will not tolerate a homeless rate of several million like we have in the United States."

Britton said he supports the approach of the Cuban government to the world economic crisis. "Fidel Castro calls the Third World debt 'immoral and unpayable' and says it ought to be canceled."

New York SWP petitioning celebrated

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

NEW YORK — Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign in New York turned out in full force the last week of the petitioning drive to place SWP candidates on the state ballot. They collected 10,914 signatures that week. The total number of signatures collected in the 22-day effort was 29,358, almost 150 percent of the 20,000 required by state law.

Campaign supporters celebrated the end of the successful drive on August 4 at a spirited open house here. More than 90 people swapped petitioning stories over food and drinks. Cheers and clapping greeted Craig Gannon, the SWP candidate for governor, when he announced the drive's results. He thanked the supporters who came from across the United States to help in the effort.

Another victory was celebrated when Susan Anmuth, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor and a striker at Eastern Airlines, described how airline workers have stood up to and defeated Frank Lorenzo's attempt to turn Eastern into another nonunion carrier. She urged everyone present to step up their efforts in support of this important strike.

Selva Nebbia, SWP candidate for Congress in the 15th District, told campaign supporters about her recent trip to Cuba where hundreds of thousands turned out July 26 to celebrate the 37th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks, which marked the beginning of the Cuban revolution.

Aaron Ruby, SWP candidate for comptroller and national chairperson of the YSA, invited all who joined in the petitioning effort to continue participating in the SWP campaign over the fall.

Young supporters of the campaign, including members of the Young Socialist Alliance, played a major role in leading a weekday team that fanned out across New York City each day, collecting 5,028 signatures in the last week. Over the three-week drive this team obtained 9,318 signatures, sold \$686 worth of Pathfinder books and more than 150 copies of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Lutte ouvrière*.

Through plant-gate tables and petitioning efforts at work, hundreds of industrial work-

ers signed petitions, from garment workers in Midtown to meat-packers on 14th Street in Manhattan, electrical workers in Long Island, and rail workers at Grand Central Station. Airline workers on picket lines against Eastern Airlines signed, as did newspaper workers at the New York *Daily News* who are deadlocked in contract negotiations.

A press conference is being planned in Albany, the state capital, on August 21, where the petitions will be turned over to the board of elections.

Pathfinder opens new bookshop in Australia

BY LEE WALKINGTON

SYDNEY, Australia — Thirty guests packed the meeting room in the back of the Pathfinder Bookstore here at a reception to mark its opening at a new location. Now in its own building at street level, the bookshop is situated in the heart of the rag-trade and printing industry district, near the central railway station.

Representing a big step forward for Pathfinder Press here, the new shop is one of 44 similar bookstores around the world that make available to working people the ideas of communist and revolutionary fighters like Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, Malcolm X, James P. Cannon, and Farrell Dobbs.

Addressing the July 13 reception, the Cuban consul to Australia, Francisco Marchante, praised the work of Pathfinder worldwide for making available the works of Cuba's revolutionary leaders, especially in the United States. This was something, he said, that no other publishing house had done.

Marchante also praised the work of Pathfinder in getting these titles to the Philippines, where he was currently headed and where he planned to assist a Pathfinder team participating in the annual Manila bookfair.

Sol Pele, a representative of the African National Congress, also spoke, praising Pathfinder's efforts to get out the truth about South Africa through publication and distribution of Nelson Mandela's *The Struggle Is My Life* and other titles. Pele said he was especially impressed by the speed with which Pathfinder had made available in print the most important speeches of Mandela since his release in February from prison.

Russell Johnson from New Zealand spoke about the experiences of Pathfinder representatives around the world. In South Africa, he said, the books are so popular that one bookshop manager did not even bother to put them out on the shelves. He just opened the boxes and within hours most of the books had been sold.

In Manila, Johnson said, Pathfinder books

were in such demand at a book exhibit last year that in some instances students spent an entire three months' living allowance on books. Johnson was on his way to join Pathfinder representatives at this year's Manila bookfair and to help launch *In Defense of Socialism*, a book of Castro's speeches, in the Philippines.

At the Havana bookfair earlier this year, Johnson noted, one Cuban student described Pathfinder as a "window on the world" for Cuba, breaching the U.S. information blockade against the island.

The new bookshop here, Johnson said, will help Pathfinder continue to play this role, bringing to the people of Australia and the Pacific region the revolutionary heritage of fighters from Marx to those of the present day.

Kate Blakeney from Sydney launched a fund appeal to raise \$2,000 for the new bookshop. More than \$400 was raised at the July 13 meeting. Contributions to the fund can be sent to 19 Terry St., Surry Hills, Sydney NSW 2010, Australia.

U.S. gov't acts to protect oil interests

Continued from front page

ship, and a nuclear submarine.

Pentagon officials have said that the size of the force deployed will depend on Iraqi military preparations and the military contributions of Washington's allies. Military support by U.S. allies has been nominal, but Iraq's defense preparations are extensive. Iraq is reported to have 200,000 soldiers in Kuwait and southern Iraq, drawn from a force of 1 million.

The Pentagon's deployment of military forces is the largest by the United States since the Vietnam War ended in the early 1970s. That war lasted 10 years and resulted in hundreds of thousands of casualties, destruction of much of the country, and eventually in Washington's defeat.

Fall of the monarchy

The U.S. military mobilization in the Arab East is in response to the fall of Kuwaiti monarch Sheik Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah on August 2, who fled to Saudi Arabia after Iraqi forces crossed the border into his oil-rich kingdom. Soon after the occupation, a provisional government was set up in Kuwait. The sheikdom was then annexed by Iraq.

Early reports indicated that Palestinians living in Kuwait had helped the Iraqi forces, leading to a rapid victory. There are 400,000 Palestinians living in Kuwait, which, according to 1987 figures, has a population of 1.9 million. The working class is mainly comprised of workers from the countries in the region. More than 60 percent of the population has no citizenship rights and they have been subjected to discriminatory policies by Kuwaiti officials. On the other hand, some 2,000 idle princes of the al-Sabah family in Kuwait have billions of dollars at their disposal. A legislature was elected by only 6 percent of the population, but the emir dismissed even that semblance of parliamentarianism two weeks before the Iraqi action.

Kuwait has no viable agriculture nor industry save for oil. Its monarch is a puppet of oil monopolies based in the United States and Britain, and the country itself was artificially created by colonial powers.

Based on historical links that go back to the Ottoman Empire and its Basra Province before world War I, Iraqis have long claimed Kuwait as part of their country. Kuwait had been separated off by colonial powers and became a British protectorate at the turn of the century. When London declared Kuwait to be an independent emirate (monarchy) in 1961, the Iraqi government asserted a claim to it.

Dispute on oil production levels

In addition to the territorial claim that Iraq had on Kuwait there were other areas of conflict. Earlier, tensions within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had risen against Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates who were selling oil above their quotas, flooding the market and lowering prices. They had agreed to end the practice after they were pressured by other OPEC members, especially Iraq and Iran. But this did not end the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, which concerned equitable exploitation of oil from their common reservoirs, as well as financial claims. Iraqi forces moved into Kuwait after the negotiations broke down.

President Bush immediately moved to freeze Iraqi assets in the United States, estimated at \$30 billion. Kuwaiti assets, estimated at \$100 billion in other countries, were also frozen. U.S. trade with Iraq, which in 1989 was around \$3.8 billion and was expected to rise this year was also put on ice. Since 1982 Baghdad has become one of the biggest buyers of U.S. wheat and rice. The trade embargo will also have an adverse effect on the farmers in this country.

UN Security Council votes

The Bush administration also immediately went on a diplomatic offensive, and pressure was brought to bear on other governments. In two separate votes the United Nations Security Council voted to condemn the Iraqi occupation and annexation of Kuwait. The votes were 14 to 0, with Yemen not voting in the first case, and it was unanimous in the second.

The UN body also voted to impose economic sanctions against Iraq to prohibit the member nations from buying oil or having virtually any commercial or financial dealing with it. This UN resolution was adopted by

a vote of 13 to 0, with all five permanent members of the Security Council — United States, Soviet Union, France, China and Britain — voting for it. Cuba and Yemen abstained. Iraq's president Saddam Hussein responded to the UN resolutions by offering to move his troops out of Kuwait on the condition that Israeli troops leave the West Bank and that Syrian troops leave Lebanon. This was rejected without much discussion.

Israeli leaders pointed to the recent events and argued that the main problem in the Middle East is not Palestinian rights, but the "belligerent Arab regimes."

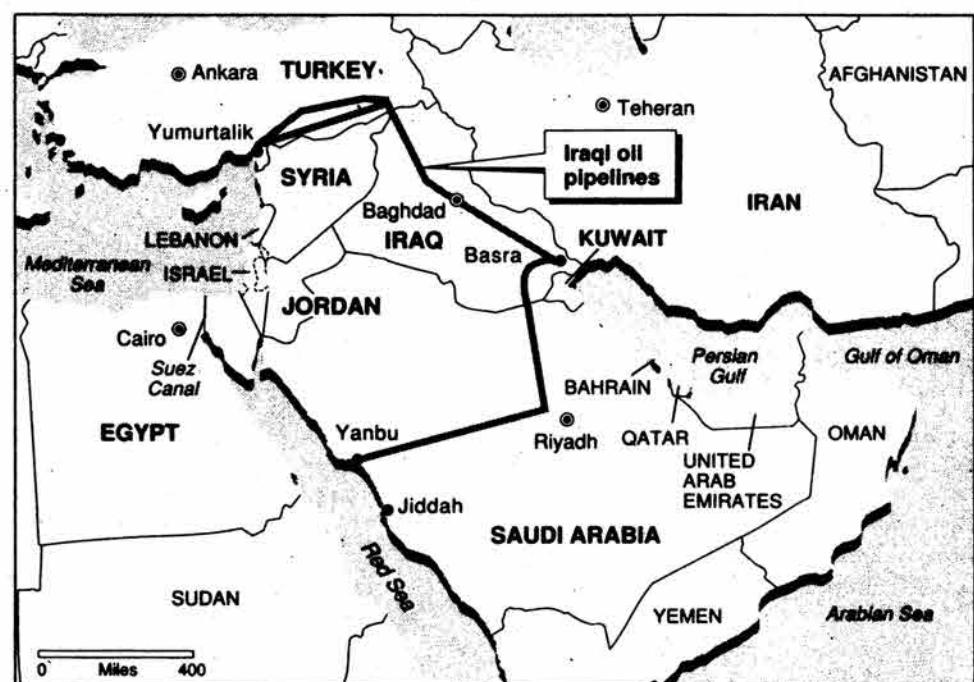
On August 15 the *New York Times* quoted Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as saying, "The only thing that can stop Saddam Hussein today is force, plentiful and strong, which will break his aggression and mischief-making." The same issue of the paper reported from Kfar Ruppin in Israel that "just outside the kibbutz today, tanks were being ferried up and down the Jordan Valley highway. Some covered with camouflage netting were already set into tank traps, guns pointed toward the river. Hawk antiaircraft missile batteries have reportedly been arrayed along the [Jordanian] border."

Statements from Baghdad have repeatedly referred to the "imperialist and Zionist forces" threatening Iraq. Baghdad charged last week that Israeli pilots and soldiers were stationed with U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia.

Israel, with the help and blessing of Washington, has nuclear weapons in its arsenal.

Naval blockade

Bush went beyond the UN resolution and imposed a naval blockade on Iraq. British and Australian governments have joined Washington declaring that their ships in the



requested Washington to implement the sanctions voted by the UN against Iraq.

Washington also claims its massing of troops in Saudi Arabia was done on the invitation of Saudi King Fahd. Fearing the reaction of the masses of the Arab people, the king was reluctant to invite Washington to send troops to his country.

Arab governments initially declared the crisis to be an Arab problem and wanted Washington's military forces to stay out. But, based on its diplomatic victory in the UN, the Bush administration mounted tremendous pressure on the Arab governments and succeeded in dividing them and getting a

Demonstrations calling for U.S. withdrawal and in defense of Iraq have taken place in Jordan, the Israeli-occupied Arab territories, Yemen, Mauritania, Syria, and Iraq.

Even in Syria, whose ruling faction of the Baath party is anti-Saddam Hussein and where unauthorized demonstrations are forbidden, travelers told a *Christian Science Monitor* reporter that "the Syrian street is pro-Saddam."

Ali Mahmoud, a worker in the Israeli occupied West Bank, told Joel Brinkley of the *New York Times*, "These other Arab leaders who are against Saddam, they are all worried about their own seats. They don't have the support of 1 percent of their people. Saddam is our leader, and I'd fight for him to remove the Americans and the traitor, King Fahd."

In Mafraq, Jordan on August 12, 7,000 marchers condemned the "invasion of the Arab Nation" by U.S. military forces, denounced King Fahd, and called upon the Saudi people "to join our masses to fight against the imperialists." Young Bedouin men also participated in the demonstration and one of them told a *Newsday* reporter, "We will send 30,000 men of our tribe to fight the American ships."

King Hussein of Jordan (no relative of President Saddam Hussein) has come to the United States in order to try to mediate between Baghdad and Washington. He has been a good friend of President Bush and his predecessors, but in this conflict he has not gone all the way against Saddam.

King Hussein, head of the Hashemite dynasty put in power by the British imperialists in the 1920s, rules a country where the majority of the population is Palestinian and widespread opposition exists to Washington's military invasion of the region. In fact, the road connecting the Jordanian port of Aqaba to Iraq is the only route where Iraq is receiving food supplies and other commodities. Aqaba is a port on the Red Sea that on the average receives seven ships a day and is a major inlet for Iraqi imports.

Bush announced August 14 that King Hussein should close the Aqaba-Iraq road in order to make the blockade complete. He has threatened Jordan with a naval blockade of Aqaba should the king fail to comply.

In an August 13 address to the joint session of the Jordanian parliament, King Hussein declared the whole crisis to be an Arab border problem that had been "transformed into a major and dangerous confrontation with international consequences" as a result of "the massing of foreign military forces on Arab soil." Hussein's remarks reflect the mass pressure that is building up in Jordan and elsewhere in the Arab world.

On August 15 President Saddam sent a letter to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani offering to settle the Iraq-Iran conflict. The two countries fought a bloody war for eight years until a cease-fire was agreed upon by both sides in 1988 under the auspices of the United Nations. In the letter, the Iraqi president expressed his agreement with the proposals set by the Iranians for settling the war and informed the Iranian president that on August 17 Iraq will unilaterally start releasing the remaining prisoners of war in its custody.

The dramatic opening for establishing peace between the two countries was welcomed in Tehran.



Palestinians from a refugee camp in Lebanon volunteer to fight for Iraq

Persian Gulf would stop and search all vessels seeking to trade with Baghdad. But many of the governments that voted for the resolution on sanctions are reported to have raised objections to Washington's escalation of the conflict by unilaterally imposing a blockade on Iraq.

The French government has said that its ships would not challenge vessels trying to break through because that would make France a cobelligerent. The Soviet and Canadian governments, which have warships in the region, said they would await a UN decision before taking part.

Yet, the contradiction that the United Nations has placed itself in by voting for the sanctions against Iraq is evidenced by a statement made by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar. The August 14 *New York Times* quoted him as saying, "Only the United Nations, through its Security Council resolutions, can really decide about a blockade. That's why I think we have to avoid the word 'blockade.'" Washington is avoiding that "b-word" and upon the advice of its international lawyers is calling it "interdiction." The Pentagon says this action is justified because the emir of Kuwait has

majority to go along at this time with its military moves against Iraq.

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt led the majority in the Arab League on August 10 to agree to send troops to Saudi Arabia to help Washington "defend" that country against Iraq. Libyan and Palestine Liberation Organization representatives voted against the move. Those from Yemen and Algeria abstained, and the Jordanian, Sudanese, and Mauritanian spokespersons expressed reservations.

The Syrian government voted for the motion. Nine of 21 members of the Arab League either voted against sending troops or expressed reservations. Five thousand Egyptian troops and contingents from Morocco are already in Saudi Arabia, and it is reported that a vanguard of Syrian troops have joined them.

Arab people oppose deployment

The U.S. troop deployment in Saudi Arabia has met with widespread opposition among the masses of Arab people. And few are unhappy about the overturn of the Kuwaiti imperialist enclave, headed by an antiquated and repressive monarchy.

Decades of imperialist domination shape politics in Arab East

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

(First of two articles)

At the heart of politics in the Middle East is imperialism's domination of the area's vast resources, in particular its substantial oil deposits, and the resistance of the region's peoples to the dispossession and exploitation that has been forced upon them.

Modern imperialism's conquest of the Arab East predates the discovery of oil in the area. British domination of the Persian Gulf began in the early part of the 1800s and was tied to Britain's conquest of India.

From the very beginning British capitalism faced stiff resistance. In the years 1807-09 and again in 1818-19 the British fleet went to war against Arab forces in the Gulf — which had loosened the grip of the Ottoman Turkish Empire — and successfully crushed them. British military occupation of strategic sections of the Persian Gulf, which later consisted of the territories that became Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar, did not end until 1971 — with the British withdrawal from Bahrain.

The British government set up a number of protectorates in the gulf area through agreements with tribal leaders, sheikhs, and the persuasive force of the British navy. This had been an area under competing control of the Ottoman Empire and the decaying Persian monarchy. With the weakening of the feudalistic Ottoman Empire, British and German imperialism entered into stiff competition over that part of the Arab world.

The British colonialists laid claim to Kuwait in 1899 by signing a treaty with the Sheikh Mobarak as-Sabah of the leading feudal family. The treaty gave the British an exclusive presence in Kuwait in exchange for £15,000 a year. Until then Kuwait was a small part of the Basra municipality in Iraq, then under Ottoman rule.

The British thus closed the mouth of the Gulf to German imperialism, which was entering the region through a planned construction of a Berlin-Baghdad railway.

The first oil concession was granted to a British concern by the Persian monarch in 1901. The company later became known as the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. (British Petroleum).

With World War I the major imperialist countries went to war to redivide the colonial possessions, arenas of economic investment, and sources of raw materials. The Turkish Ottoman Empire sided with the German imperialists who were defeated by the British, French, and U.S. alliance in 1918.

The Arab masses rose up during the war against the Ottoman Empire and sought to

bring an end to colonial rule and imperialist domination. The British rulers, seeking to open a new front in its war against German imperialism, promised to support an independent Arab state that would include the entire Arabian Peninsula up to Syria. The promise was made to Husayn ibn Ali, the Hashemite ruler of the Hejaz, which is today part of Saudi Arabia.

Arab forces liberated large parts of the Arab East, including major cities such as Damascus, today the capital of Syria. However, with the end of the first world imperialist war, the Arab rebellion was crushed by French troops and the newly independent government in Damascus was dissolved.

Britain and France carved up the conquered region between them. Syria and Lebanon became French colonies and Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq became British colonies. The entire Arab East had thus been opened up for unbridled imperialist exploitation.

Husayn's son Faisal had been a central figure in the independent Arab government of Damascus. In order to buy off a section of the leadership of the Arab uprisings, the British offered Faisal the throne of the British-run province of Iraq; an offer he accepted. The British made Husayn's other son, Abdallah, king of the Transjordan province (Jordan), and thus established the Hashemite monarchies of Iraq and Jordan. Only North Yemen and what later became Saudi Arabia won independence.

It was in order to build a new bulwark against any future outbreaks of anti-imperialist, Arab nationalist rebellions that the British government in 1917 backed the plans of European Zionists to colonize Palestine. "We should there form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism," wrote Theodor Herzl, the leader of the World Zionist Organization.

The struggle of the Arab masses against imperialist domination then became intertwined with the struggle of Palestinians against Zionist colonization and later the state of Israel.

British approval for oil concessions

After they consolidated their domination over Iraq following World War II, the British imperialists began producing oil on a massive scale in their Iraqi protectorate.

Local rulers in the rest of the Gulf could give no oil concessions to foreign firms without British approval. British domination of all aspects of economic life became the rule. For example, by 1942 all banking activity in Kuwait had to be done by British banks and the British Indian rupee became the currency for all of the Gulf protectorates.

By the late 1940s oil production began in earnest in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar, as well as the other protectorates that are today consolidated into the United Arab Emirates.

U.S. capital had initially been frozen out of this process. Through control of their colonies, the British imperialists maintained their economic domination of the region. But Washington began bringing strong pressure to bear for an "open door" policy. The British caved in and in 1928 agreed to share the spoils.

The American Group owned by Jersey Standard and Standard of New York (SOC-ONY), and financed by the Rockefeller family's banking interests, was given a 23.75 percent share of the newly formed Iraq Petroleum Co. The other partners were Anglo-Persian (BP), Royal Dutch Shell, and Compagnie Française des Petroles — each with 23.75 percent.

The big prize was the 60-year concession for the exploration and exploitation of oil granted by the Saudi Arabian king to Standard of California (SOCAL) in 1933.

By the end of the 1930s U.S. oil giants had acquired a substantial share of Middle East oil, reaching 42 percent, and had become dominant players. By then the Arabian Gulf was the private domain of the seven sisters, as they were called: Jersey Standard (today called Exxon), Mobil, Gulf, SOCAL (Chevron), Texaco, Anglo-Persian (BP), and Royal Dutch Shell.

The region's toilers put up stiff resistance



Rally in the streets of Cairo, Gamal Abdel Nasser at center, after nationalization of Egypt's Suez Canal in July 1956. Egyptian toilers dealt blow to imperialism's domination of Middle East when they toppled Egypt's King Farouk in 1952. At the heart of politics in Arab East today is imperialism's domination of the area's resources and labor and the Arab masses' resistance to it.

against exploitation by foreign imperialist concerns. They sought to overcome the divisions brought about by their separation into several British-created states.

In the years 1936-38 a massive revolt broke out in Palestine. A six-month general strike by the Arab masses was followed by a six-month war of liberation. An uprising also challenged British domination of Egypt and a general strike broke out in Syria.

The British rulers were forced to concede formal independence to Iraq in 1932 and ended their protectorate in Egypt in 1937. During the second imperialist war Jordan was granted independence and France acceded independence to Syria and Lebanon. However a United Arab Middle East, the goal of the rebellion during World War I, had been prevented.

These new states were landlord-dominated monarchies except for Lebanon and Syria, which were republics. From Egypt and Jordan in the west to Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Iran on the Gulf, these monarchies defended the imperialist oil companies' interests.

The Arab masses were dealt a devastating defeat in 1948 when their resistance was crushed at the hands of the Zionist settlers. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forcibly expelled and the state of Israel proclaimed. A strategic alliance between the United States, Israel, and Britain was forged at the center of which was the defense of imperialism's interests in the area.

Revolution in Iran

A wave of popular upsurge broke out in Iran in the early 1950s. Iran is a primarily non-Arab country but plays a decisive role in the region. The upsurge led to the election of Mohammad Mossadegh and to the nationalizations of the now renamed Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. (BP). Iran's oil was to be Iranian. Massive solidarity actions broke out in Iraq, another country dominated by British oil companies.

A blockade of Iranian oil was organized by British forces. Kuwait, which was still a dominion of the empire, played a decisive role in the outcome. Large-scale production of Kuwaiti oil offset the need for Iranian oil. Thus Kuwait played the role of a "scab," a role it has played many times since. Mossadegh was overthrown by a CIA-organized coup in 1953 and supporters of the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi regained control.

The first big blow to imperialist domination in the region came in 1952 in Egypt. A revolution toppled King Farouk. His monarchy had been long subservient to British interests. A republic was proclaimed and in 1954 Gamal Abdel Nasser became president. The landlords' estates were broken up and

redistributed to the peasants. Other popular measures were carried out.

In 1956 Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, which was owned and operated by British and French capitalists. The canal was a dominant piece in imperialism's control of the region. The nationalization was a major challenge to them. British, French, and Israeli troops invaded Egypt and after some weeks were forced to pull out.

The new regime under Nasser laid claim to the leadership of all the Arab people in their struggle to rid themselves of imperialist domination. Nasser pledged to free Palestine and proclaimed his goal of accomplishing the tasks of the Arab rebellion during World War I, that is, overcoming the divisions fostered by imperialism; reclaiming all the Arab lands for the Arabs; and forming a united Arab nation.

A key element to imperialist opposition to Egypt was the formation of the "Baghdad Pact" in 1955. The pact established a "mutual security" alliance between Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Britain, and later the United States.

The victory scored by the masses in Egypt inspired new struggles, and Nasser's appeals fell on the receptive ears of millions. New rebellions broke out throughout the region, in Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Jordan, Cyprus, and Algeria.

(To be continued)

Georges Mehrabian is an Arab-American born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon. He is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-575 and is currently the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, 10th District, in New Jersey.

Pathfinder Bookstore in Des Moines vandalized

BY TED LEONARD

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Pathfinder Bookstore and offices of the Socialist Workers Party 1990 Election Campaign here were vandalized August 14.

Héctor Marroquín, the SWP's candidate for U.S. Congress in the 4th C.D., discovered at 11:30 a.m. that someone had attempted to smash the bookstore windows. The attack caused more than \$600 damage. The windows were not, however, broken out because they were made of laminated glass.

Bookstore manager Jason Redrup told the *Militant* that supporters of the Pathfinder Bookstore and the Socialist Workers Party's election campaign intend to press city authorities and police for immediate action to find out who did the damage and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.

U.S. gov't ferries troops to Persian Gulf on Eastern Airlines

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

Eastern Airlines is one of the commercial air carriers that is helping to transport tens of thousands of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia, according to recent newspaper and television accounts.

While the Pentagon would not confirm this report, for reasons of "national security," spokespersons did admit, however, that it would not be uncommon for commercial airlines "on a daily basis" to carry soldiers and military cargo, even in routine situations.

Attempts were also made to confirm this with Eastern's corporate communications office, but they refused to return phone calls from the *Militant*.

Eastern already has a \$120 million federal contract to transport military and other government employees — a deal that angered Eastern strikers and their supporters throughout the labor movement.

"I would be concerned about our troops using a struck carrier with nonprofessionals in there. I certainly wouldn't want our troops flying a struck carrier. We're sending our troops into battle, and you wouldn't want to put them on a carrier that you're uneasy with," explained Frank Ortis, national Eastern strike coordinator from Miami.

The region's toilers put up stiff resistance

Machinists gear up with round of strike activities

Some 8,500 International Association of Machinists (IAM) members struck Eastern Airlines March 4, 1989, in an effort to block the company's drive to break the union and impose massive concessions on workers.

As of the *Militant's* closing news date, Wednesday, August 15, the strike was in its 530th day.

The Eastern workers' fight has

strikers" was overwhelmingly favorable.

Dozens of unions from the New York area were represented, including a large contingent of members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union on strike against Domsey Trading Co. in Brooklyn.

A delegation of unionists and officers of two telephone workers' unions from Puerto Rico also turned

ipated, including members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1205, which represents workers on strike against Greyhound Bus Lines. When asked by a reporter why he was there, Roy Nutter, ATU Local 1205 president, said, "We are all soldiers in the same war."

Five Eastern flight attendants and 10 members of the Air Line Pilots Association attended the activity. The ALPA members have not been called back to Eastern since ALPA ended its sympathy strike with the Machinists last November. Dressed in uniform, the pilots distributed a flier to passengers regarding the indictments against Eastern and nine supervisors for falsifying maintenance records.

The group assembled directly in front of the doors to Eastern and Continental and chanted, "Scabs out, union in; no contract, no peace," and "Proud to be union" for over an hour. Strikers prominently displayed a new banner made and donated by Painters District Council 35 and Sign Painters Local 391 that read, "Machinists on strike; please don't fly Eastern/Continental; no contract, no peace."

The assembly then took its message inside the terminal. Neither Eastern management nor the two state cops on duty tried to stop the demonstrators from entering the terminal.

Because of a series of actions like this, strikers have been able to make ineffective a court injunction, ob-

tained by Eastern at the beginning of the walkout, that aimed to limit strike activities at the airport.

The effects of the deepening crisis that is rocking Eastern management was plainly visible at the regular biweekly Saturday solidarity picket line and impromptu walk-through of the carrier's terminal at the Los Angeles airport on August 4.

Referring to the recent safety indictments, strike coordinator Joe Mos explained, "Eastern doesn't need mechanics. Eastern just needs pencils with sharp points."

"Flying with Eastern is like playing Russian roulette," he said, addressing the crowd of supporters with a bullhorn. Strikers distributed scores of small pencils imprinted with the legend, "Lorenzo/Shugrue Mech. Tool." Martin Shugrue is the court-appointed trustee in charge of Eastern since Frank Lorenzo was ousted as head of the air carrier in April.

At a brief rally following the picket, Mos introduced a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union who appealed for support for a boycott of Farmer John products. The UFCW is in a contract fight at Farmer John, one of the main packinghouses in southern California.

Chanting, "Safety yes, scabs no," more than 125 striking members of

IAM Lodge 702 demonstrated outside Eastern Airlines Gate No. 1 in Miami on August 3. Lodge 702 had called this expanded picket line in response to the recent safety indictments against the airline.

Pickets noticed an audible increase in the number of friendly honks and blasts from air horns on passing trucks as drivers saw the union's banner along 36th Street. The busy street passes the Eastern gates on the north side of Miami International Airport. "Union = safety; scab Eastern unsafe; make Eastern safe; contract now," the banner said.

One striker explained how the union gave the Machinists confidence to stand up to company pressure. "There were definitely problems with planes that needed to be fixed real fast. Normally, anyone with scruples would check it more. That's how I work. It will be fixed before I sign it. That's how I live."

"They might have tried to pressure me. But I never did. I told them I know where my tool box is and I'm ready to go home. It's not a big story. But that's what we did."

A small contingent of ALPA pilots also attended the picket line.

Maggie Pucci, a member of IAM Lodge 1726 on strike against Eastern in Boston; Geoff Mirelowitz from Los Angeles and Pete Seidman from Miami contributed to this column.

SUPPORT EASTERN STRIKERS!

won broad support from working people in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Canada, Bermuda, Sweden, New Zealand, France, and elsewhere in the world. Readers — especially Eastern strikers — are encouraged to send news of strike solidarity activities to this column.

Some 250 Eastern strikers and their supporters converged August 4 and formed "Don't fly Eastern" human billboards across the 94th Street overpass that leads to New York's La Guardia Airport.

Throughout the two-hour action, the response by passing motorists and those driving limousines, taxicabs, and buses to placards reading "Honk if you support the Eastern

out. They were visiting New York to publicize opposition by Puerto Rico's telephone workers to the planned privatization of the telephone industry there.

Following a brief rally to hear greetings and messages from the unions present, small groups clad in red strike T-shirts made quick passes through the terminal. The demonstration then resumed outside Eastern's passenger entrance.

Striking Machinists in Boston began the 18th month of their battle by holding an expanded picket line on August 4 at the Eastern terminal of the Logan airport.

Thirty strikers and representatives of more than 20 unions partic-

Union-buster Lorenzo out at Continental Airlines

Continued from front page

(IAM) went out on strike. All those who refused to cross the picket lines were fired and scabs were brought in.

A month later, Lorenzo walked into court and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, citing "excessive labor costs," which voided the union's contracts. Continental then laid off all of its 12,000 employees and rehired about 4,200 of them at about 50 percent of their previous pay and effectively busted the Machinists and other unions at the airline.

Lorenzo's Texas Air Corp., which owned Continental, went on to purchase Eastern Airlines in 1986, which Eastern's workers designated as the beginning of a "reign of terror" of stepped-up harassment and victimization of workers, firings, forced overtime, and speedup.

In March 1989, after 15 months of contract talks and company demands of \$150 million in concessions from the IAM, 8,500 ramp workers, aircraft cleaners, and mechanics struck, and up until late November were joined by Eastern's pilots and flight attendants.

Strike halts Eastern's operations

The combined action of the IAM, pilots, and flight attendants unions virtually halted all of Eastern's operations.

Five days after the strike began, Lorenzo again entered court, this time on behalf of Eastern, and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Going on 18 months, members of the International Association of Machinists have maintained their strike, and have drawn strength from the worldwide solidarity their fight has received. In addition, from April 1989 to February 1990, their strike overlapped with the battle of miners at Pittston Coal.

Even with the resumption of flights in a number of cities during the strike, passenger loads on the airline have remained low and well below what's needed just to break even.

In 1989 Texas Air posted losses totaling \$885.6 million. And Eastern continued to lose a couple million dollars a day. A huge

\$1 billion debt built up to Eastern's creditors.

Finally on April 18, 1990, after Lorenzo's last reorganization plan included a proposal to pay Eastern's creditors 10 cents to the dollar owed, the bankruptcy judge removed Lorenzo from the day-to-day operations at Eastern and replaced him with Martin Shugrue as trustee.

Even today, Eastern continues to lose millions of dollars and just recently posted a net loss of \$35.6 million for the second quarter, and papers filed in bankruptcy court indicate that the carrier expects a loss of \$510.5 million for the year. And since filing for bankruptcy in March 1989, the airline has lost more than \$1.2 billion.

SAS buys Continental

Lorenzo is selling all of his stock in Continental Holdings Inc. to Scandinavian Airline System (SAS). SAS is 50 percent owned by the governments of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. SAS is ranked 19th in number of passengers carried, but is the world's ninth most profitable airline and had an operating profit of \$353 million in 1989.

In June the Texas Air Corp. name was changed to Continental Holdings Corp. in an effort to beef up the company's image due to all of the negative publicity that Texas Air had received.

Under the agreement, SAS will buy out Lorenzo's five-year employment contract that has a base yearly salary of \$365,000, plus various bonuses of at least \$570,000.

SAS is also purchasing all the shares of Jet Capital Corp., which is a personal investment company owned by Lorenzo and two other investors, who are selling their stakes as well.

In all, Lorenzo will walk away with about \$30.5 million from the deal. But part of the deal also contains a clause obligating Lorenzo to stay out of the airline business for at least seven years.

Frank Ortis, national Eastern strike coordinator and president of IAM Local Lodge 702 in Miami, indicated the union felt vindicated by this event because it has become more and more clear that Lorenzo "was a true robber baron." He explained the fight at Eastern is still on. "Our efforts will remain to keep up the picket lines and keep fighting for a union contract."

gation to abide by the pilots' contract and paves the way for the airline to cut pilots' wages by 20 percent.

"It's clear that prompt cost reductions, including pilot labor-cost reductions, are essential if an imminent liquidation is to be avoided," Judge Lifland said.

The Air Line Pilots Association leadership ended the pilots sympathy strike at Eastern last November. Most of the 1,900 pilots now flying for Eastern are not ALPA members, but they had been represented by the pilots' association in court proceedings.

Martin Shugrue, Eastern's trustee, testified in court that the airline would stand to lose at least \$192 million in the last eight months of the year and could lose another \$30 million unless pilots agree to concessions.

The bankruptcy court also gave the airline permission to remove another \$50 million from its escrow account for continued operating expenses.

An August 9 deadline for the financing of

the United Airlines union has been extended another two months.

The buyout plan was put together by the IAM, Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), and the Air Line Pilots Association, as well as unorganized employees.

In order for the deal to go through, a loan of \$4.38 billion is necessary. Initially some banking institutions, including the Chemical Banking Corp., had shown interest. But as yet, the needed loans have not come through.

Members of the IAM, which represents almost 26,000 ground service workers at United, voted to accept the buyout proposal on May 10 as part of a five-year contract. The buyout of the second largest U.S. airline would result in an employee stock ownership plan.

The contract includes the IAM's share of \$2 billion in concessions required from employees as "sweat equity" to finance the deal. The AFA, representing 12,700 United workers, and ALPA, with 6,300 members, had already ratified the vote.



Eastern strikers at New York's La Guardia Airport picket line on August 4

Labor news in the *Militant*

The *Militant* stays on top of the most important developments in the labor movement. You won't miss them if you subscribe. See the ad on page 2.

Socialists kick off \$1 million fund

Expansion needed to respond to increased openings and opportunities

BY GREG McCARTAN

OBERLIN, Ohio — An international expansion fund of \$1 million was launched here August 9 during the 35th convention of the Socialist Workers Party. Some 700 socialist workers, their friends and supporters, students, and youth participated in the fund's kick-off event.

Under a banner reading "Building the Communist Movement in the 1990s," a panel of speakers, accompanied by a slide show, explained the increased opportunities to circulate socialist periodicals and Pathfinder books internationally among today's fighters. To continue to take advantage of these openings and bigger opportunities in the future, the speakers explained, major capital

struggles in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States.

Harris also reported on the growth of sales and distribution of Pathfinder titles. There are now some 40 Pathfinder bookstores in seven countries. International teams of supporters have traveled to bookfairs in a number of countries, meeting fighters from Cuba to Trinidad and Tobago to the Philippines.

Pathfinder also organized successful speaking tours in the United States and Canada for Cuban economist and author of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, Carlos Tablada.

The heightened interest in, and work to promote, the range of Pathfinder's titles re-

gards, of communists, who trace their own continuity back to the Communist International in the early 1920s," Dugré said. Books by James P. Cannon and Farrell Dobbs — working-class and union leaders in the 1930s and founding members of the SWP — are an essential part of this communist continuity, he said.

"Pathfinder," Dugré said, "is being read and being used by a growing number of fighters who are turning to this internationalist and anticapitalist perspective."

"It is this perspective that gives Pathfinder its understanding of the importance of publishing books and pamphlets like *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches* and *Nelson Mandela: Speeches 1990*."

Importance of print shop

"The success of the socialist periodicals and publications show the importance of the several goals of the expansion fund," said Frank Forrestal. "Without the political understanding, initiative, creativity, and skills of those who work today in the Pathfinder print shop, it would be literally impossible to print the political weapons our class needs to chart a Marxist course forward in today's world." Forrestal is the director of the print shop and a leader of the SWP.

Forrestal described how the party has fought for decades to make available to working people and youth the works of revolutionary working-class leaders, a weekly socialist newspaper, books by leaders of the communist movement, and timely pamphlets on big events in the class struggle.

Initially this material had to be published through commercial printers. But with the growth of the socialist movement through the radicalization of young people in the 1960s we were able to establish a small print shop, he pointed out.

Capital donations from supporters and volunteer labor made further expansion in the early 1970s possible, Forrestal said. But after 20 years of use, the newspaper press is showing signs of wear and needs to be refurbished. In addition, a new and more modern sheet-fed press — used in the printing of book covers, promotional material, photo signatures, and color work — is also needed. This equipment can be used in the printing of short runs of books in Pathfinder's communist arsenal.

Jonathan Silberman, the executive secretary of the Communist League of Britain, explained the centrality of the communist leadership school in the building of revolutionary working-class parties today. Some of the donations to the million-dollar expansion fund will be used for needed construction projects at the school to prepare for the next session in 1991.

Silberman said the leadership school al-

lows workers who are involved in the day-to-day work of leading a revolutionary organization to take several months out to study the works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels — the founders of scientific socialism.

The political education earned through a serious study and discussion of the political activity and writings of Marx and Engels by communist workers is an essential part of building working-class parties today, he said.

Capital and collective volunteer labor

Militant circulation director and staff writer Roni McCann explained the steps needed to reorganize and repair the Pathfinder Building, which includes remodeling several of its floors. The building houses the business and editorial offices of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder; Pathfinder's print shop; and the national offices of the SWP.

"It took collective capital donations — and collective volunteer labor — to transform the Pathfinder Building into the international acquisition it is today," McCann said.

While major projects have been undertaken since the building was first acquired in 1970, no major new improvements or repairs have been made since 1985.

Central to the projects the expansion fund will finance, she said, "is the remodeling and restructuring of the top floors of the building that house the SWP's national office and the library that serves the needs of the editorial staffs and political leadership bodies." An upgraded computer system and professional training for the staffs is needed. These moves, in line with the party's political needs today, can allow for more collective and centralized functioning.

The first contributions to the \$1 million fund, totaling \$4,000, were made toward the restructuring of the library, McCann said. These funds were donated at two meetings at the end of July to celebrate the life of Reba Hansen, a socialist activist and party member for nearly 60 years. Hansen, who devoted much of her later years to organizing and improving the library, died in July.

Only capital contributions by supporters of the movement can raise the kind of funds needed to achieve these goals, the speakers said. The enthusiastic participants in the event responded quickly to the appeal for substantial contributions. Prince announced at the end of the convention that a total of \$580,500 had been contributed so far by 41 individuals.

To make a contribution to the fund contact: The Expansion Fund, 406 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



Militant photos by Margrethe Siem

Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party financial secretary; Roni McCann, *Militant* circulation director.

expenditures are needed to upgrade, remodel, and repair the Pathfinder Building in New York. The Pathfinder Building houses the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder Press — tools to build the communist movement around the world.

Luis Madrid, editor of the Spanish-language socialist monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, chaired the program. He introduced Socialist Workers Party Financial Secretary Dave Prince who explained that contributions to the fund start at \$1,000. Smaller contributions will go towards the SWP Party-Building Fund.

The ability to launch the fund and meet the goal, Prince noted, grows out of the widening struggles by working people around the world today, "from the Eastern and Pittston strikes to the historic changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union we are discussing at the convention."

"This is an international project, the work of conscious revolutionaries, who are determined, through our collective efforts, to construct communist parties," he said.

Madrid introduced Kate Kaku, the principal spokesperson of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and a leader of the Des Moines, Iowa, branch of the SWP.

Role of 'Militant,' Pathfinder

Kaku described how the *Militant* has become the paper of a layer of vanguard fighters — from Eastern strikers in the United States to coal miners in Britain. The socialist press brings firsthand coverage of their battles and news and analysis on struggles for national liberation, the Cuban revolution, the fight against apartheid in South Africa, and more.

In addition, *Perspectiva Mundial* and *Lutte ouvrière* have a growing readership among fighters whose first languages are Spanish and French. The periodicals are indispensable tools in the building of communist parties today, Kaku said.

SWP leader James Harris participated in an international bookfair and reporting trip in Zimbabwe in 1989. Last year, he said, *Militant* reporting teams traveled to 11 countries, in addition to maintaining a bureau in Nicaragua that has provided timely, on-the-spot coverage from the country since 1979.

These international reporting trips supplement weekly coverage from worker-correspondents who are involved in strikes and

sulted in a 50 percent increase in the number of books sold in 1989 over 1988, Harris said, adding that "in the first half of 1990 more books were sold than in all of 1989."

A member of the United Steelworkers of America and candidate of the Communist League of Canada for mayor of Montréal, Michel Dugré, described Pathfinder's publishing program.

"Pathfinder has just come out with a new edition of *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky," Dugré said. The book is among the "communist core of the Pathfinder arsenal of books. This book is an indispensable tool for all those who want to understand the events taking place in Central and Eastern Europe today," he said.

"Pathfinder's publications are made possible by the collective efforts of human be-

Rally nets pledges for party building

BY JAMES HARRIS

OBERLIN, Ohio — The Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund got off to a rousing start at a rally ending the second session of the SWP's 35th constitutional convention here. The party's candidate for governor of New York, Craig Gannon, led a foot-stomping, hand-clapping, cheering, and chanting crowd in raising over \$137,700 in pledges and donations toward the fund's goal of

James Harris is the director of the SWP Party-Building Fund.

\$140,000 by December 1. The \$137,700 was raised in pledges ranging from \$5 to \$1,000.

"How many people here can pledge \$1,000 dollars to the fund?" Gannon asked. He was quickly answered by the sight of dozens of envelopes being waved in the air by those who were pledging at least \$1,000 as the rally participants cheered and clapped in encouragement.

After all those present who were able to give \$1,000 had given, Gannon asked for \$500 dollar contributions and got an even bigger response with more envelopes being waved in the air and more roaring approval from the convention. When Gannon reached the \$5 pledges and donations the enthusiastic

response of the gathering was the same as to those of \$1,000 and \$500.

The money in this fund, as was explained over the course of the previous four days of the convention, will make it possible to finance the outreach work of the socialist movement. It will pay for teams of fighting workers — members of the SWP, Young Socialist Alliance, and their supporters — who will take the *Militant* and the Spanish- and French-language publications *Perspectiva Mundial* and *Lutte ouvrière* to Eastern strikers and other airline workers, working farmers, meat-packers, coal miners, farm workers, students, and others throughout the country in the coming months.

The fund will help provide the resources to get out a new issue of the *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, that will contain the political resolution adopted by the convention. The money will also fund new publishing projects by Pathfinder Press, two of which are *Nelson Mandela: Intensifiquemos la lucha* — a pamphlet of speeches by Nelson Mandela translated to Spanish — and a new edition of *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*.

The fund will also help to pay for many different projects such as the international reporting teams sponsored by the *Militant*.

In the last year alone reporting teams have been sent to the Philippines, Cuba, Trinidad, Barbados, Panama, Mexico, El Salvador, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Namibia, Finland, and Korea. The Pathfinder teams that have been sent to bookfairs and political events all over the world are promoting and selling Pathfinder books and literature. Later this year a team will attend the bookfair in Frankfurt, Germany, the largest in the world.

The fund will also be used to finance the SWP's leadership school that enables leaders of the party to get away from daily leadership responsibilities and study the writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The contributions will place the party in a better position to respond quickly to the daily challenges and opportunities that the movement will face throughout the year.

Militant readers are encouraged to send in contributions to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund
I pledge: \$1,000 \$500
 \$250 \$100 \$____ other to
the fund.

Send checks or money orders to Socialist Workers Party Party-Building Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Housing in Bluefields, Nicaragua, built by contingent of Cuban workers last year. One hundred of a projected 1,000 units were finished. New Nicaraguan government has done nothing to restart project.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

BLUEFIELDS, Nicaragua — Three hundred Cuban construction workers who had been building houses for local residents here returned to Cuba in April. They departed after Nicaragua's newly elected president, Violeta Chamorro, refused to guarantee their security. A number of Cuban doctors have remained.

The Cuban construction workers had been working with townspeople to put up 1,000 new houses for families devastated by Hurricane Joan in 1988. More than 100 homes had been completed when the Cubans left. The construction workers left all their machinery and materials. But thus far, the new government, headed by the National Opposition Union (UNO), has done nothing to get housing construction going again.

Many residents — of diverse political viewpoints — would like the Cubans to come back. Some forces oppose their return.

Maxwell Atily, executive secretary of the

new regional government, says, "The people of Bluefields were the losers" in the construction project. In exchange for providing materials and machinery, "the Cubans took our lumber," he charges.

Osmond Wells, an UNO supporter who was elected to the region's autonomous governing council, asserts that the Cuban workers "threw stones at Violeta [Chamorro]" when she campaigned here.

"Marxism and communism are a danger to us. We don't want that kind of Cuban here — not the Fidel Castro kind," he says.

Ray Hooker, regional political secretary of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), says Atily's charge that the Cubans carried off Nicaraguan lumber "is a blatant lie. Cuba provided all the building materials free, except for lumber used in the roof beams. Nicaragua supplied that because Cuba has a shortage of lumber."

"It is also a lie," Hooker says, "that Cuban workers attacked UNO supporters during the

election campaign. The Cuban workers were very respectful of the rights of Nicaraguans. They did not mingle in our internal affairs."

"The Cubans were popular here," he states, adding that Bluefields residents have sent a letter to the central government urging it to invite the workers back.

'They were going to install communism'

Talking with local residents on the street, no one recalls Cuban workers stoning Violeta Chamorro or any other UNO supporter. A minority of those interviewed are hostile to the Cubans, such as one man who insists, "They were going to put 1,000 Cubans in those houses and install communism!"

An airport worker says he doesn't want the Cubans to return "because that will mean the Sandino people are back in power. Some of them liked the military life and were catching all the children to put them in the army. You had to send your children to Costa Rica."

Palmerston Budier, pastor of the Moravian Church, explains he has many disagreements with the Sandinistas. But as far as the Cuban housing project goes, "I think the help was very good. The Cubans worked hard."

Spicer Solomon is a young carpenter who is Black and English-speaking. He went to Costa Rica for two years to avoid the Nicaraguan draft. Solomon thinks the Cubans "brought good help to the people."

His friend, who quit the Sandinista army because he disagreed with the FSLN, says, "If UNO can't finish the housing, the Cubans should come back."

Near the Bluefields airport are dozens of the new homes the Cubans helped build. Julia Pérez, who is mestizo (Spanish-speaking), proudly shows off her new home. The floor is tiled, a rarity in working-class communities in Nicaragua. It's an airy house, with brightly painted walls and an indoor bathroom.

But since the Cubans had to leave abruptly, the water system was never finished. Everyone in the neighborhood has to walk quite a distance to get water.

Should the Cubans come back? "That would be great!" says Pérez.

Alice Hodgson's husband, an unemployed fisherman, worked for a year in a construction brigade. She wishes the Cubans would return to finish the water system.

"The Cubans treated people real good," she says.

Hodgson and her next door neighbor, Virginia Casanova, are both English-speaking Blacks. They feel the homes were distributed fairly equally among Blacks, mestizos, and Miskito Indians.

A conflict arose, they explain, when the Cubans had to leave prematurely, with only part of the 1,000 houses completed. Some people who had put in long hours in the brigades did not receive a home. Others got homes who had never worked in the construction brigades, such as a few teachers, they say. Hodgson and Casanova also say that those who did get homes were later pressured to vote for the FSLN in the February elections.

An unemployed fisherman who is mestizo worked with the Cubans to build his house. He says they were exemplary in their relations with the local community. Any construction

Nicaraguans in Bluefields debate inviting construction workers from Cuba to return

worker who engaged in undisciplined behavior, he says, "was immediately sent back to Cuba by the Cuban government."

David Sánchez lives next to the Cuban-built neighborhood and flies a large FSLN flag in his yard. He heads the local organization of disabled veterans of the contra war. Sánchez relates how after Hurricane Joan, "The first airplane to arrive was from Cuba. They were the first to bring us food."

"In the February 25 elections," he says, "people voted against the FSLN. But they did not vote against the Cubans."

Cubans first to send flood aid to coast region

BY SETH GALINSKY

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Cuban government was the first to respond to a request by President Violeta Chamorro for emergency flood aid to Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

Rivers throughout the North Atlantic Coast, which is home to Miskito and Sumo Indians, Blacks, and mestizos, overflowed after heavy rains in June and July.

Some 170 communities and 16,000 families have been affected. About 130,000 acres of land planted with food crops were destroyed.

On July 19 Cuba sent 23 doctors and 12 tons of medicine, along with food and clothing. One of the biggest concerns from the flooding is the spread of contagious diseases.

"We thank the Cuban government," stated Brooklyn Rivera, the government minister assigned to the Atlantic Coast, in an interview with the daily *La Prensa*. "We didn't expect such an immediate response."

The Cuban contingent arrived on the coast accompanied by Health Minister Ernesto Salmerón and the economic attaché of the Cuban embassy in Managua, Vicente Muñiz.

After the victory of Violeta Chamorro in the February presidential elections, Cuban doctors who had been working on the north Atlantic Coast returned home. The Cubans had been there during much of the last 10 years at the request of the Sandinista National Liberation Front-led government. Cuba requested that the new government guarantee the security of the volunteers, but this was not done.

According to Bayardo Peña, director of a Moravian church aid project in Puerto Cabezas, the Cubans left after receiving threats, "mainly by some returning exiles." The community welcomes the return of the Cubans, he noted. Peña is also a member of the government-organized emergency commission to channel aid to the coast.

While nongovernmental organizations such as the Red Cross and the Moravian and Catholic churches have begun sending food, clothing, and medicine to the hardest hit areas, as of July 24 the only other government to respond has been the United States, through the Agency for International Development. But according to Peña, "so far the U.S. aid is just at the stage of promises."

Villagers of Pearl Lagoon discuss autonomy project

BY AARON RUBY

PEARL LAGOON, Nicaragua — From Bluefields, the main city on the southern Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, it takes two hours by motor boat to reach Pearl Lagoon, a village of 2,000 inhabitants. Pearl Lagoon is one of nearly a dozen fishing and farming communities, accessible only by boat, that are located along the banks of a large lagoon of the same name.

In 1979 the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) led a victorious insurrection in the Pacific and central parts of Nicaragua, overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship.

"We never heard of the FSLN until a few weeks before the triumph and we only met them afterwards," explained Nubia Ordoñez, political secretary of the FSLN in Pearl Lagoon and the head of the Ministry of Education there. She explained that the first members of the FSLN to appear were from the Pacific and were unfamiliar with the Atlantic Coast.

The revolution brought electricity and a health clinic to Pearl Lagoon. But serious economic difficulties developed due to the departure of a local merchant, Yong Chan, shortly before the overthrow of Somoza. He had owned several boats, bought most of the catch from the fishermen, made loans, and provided the only regular transportation to Bluefields.

His properties were subsequently confiscated by the FSLN-led government, but under the pressure of the U.S.-backed war and economic blockade, the government was not able to replace the market, transportation, and credit relations that existed under Chan.

The FSLN leadership also did not initially recognize the differences that had historically molded different national identities among the inhabitants on the Atlantic Coast, the majority of whom are English-speaking Blacks (Creoles and Garifunas) and Miskito,

Sumo, or Rama Indians. The residents of Pearl Lagoon, for example, are Creole.

Early attempts to mechanically apply the revolution's programs from the Spanish-speaking Pacific Coast to the Atlantic were seen as impositions and were resisted. This was quickly capitalized upon by the U.S. government and resulted in some *costeño* youth taking up arms against the Sandinista army.

A group of 40 of these young people here, who have laid down their arms now, talked with this reporter.

"The first Spanish people we ever had in Pearl Lagoon were Sandinista soldiers," explained Liston Hooker, who was in the U.S.-backed armed groups from 1982 until 1988. "Sandinista soldiers didn't respect us," he said, in particular the youth, some of whom were "Rastas" who wore long braided hair and smoked marijuana.

"We wanted to separate from the Pacific," explained Barney Bevin. He and the others, all Creoles, are mainly unemployed fishermen today.

Autonomy project

They accepted an amnesty offer in 1988 and laid down their arms. They said they had suffered military defeats and were attracted by the recently begun autonomy project.

The autonomy project promoted the languages and cultures on the coast and offered autonomous decision making for the region for the first time.

"We support autonomy but it needs to be stronger," Hooker explained as others nodded.

In the February 1990 national elections, the FSLN candidates lost in Pearl Lagoon both on the national slate and for the autonomous regional council.

Linton Fax, UNO delegate to the council, *Continued on Page 10*

Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast today

'Central government wants to let autonomy die through benign neglect'

BY CINDY JAQUITH

BLUEFIELDS, Nicaragua — The downtown streets of Bluefields, a city of 40,000 on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, are filled with small merchants. Many of them arrived from the Pacific Coast following Hurricane Joan in 1988. Some wave wads of Nicaraguan currency in one hand and a calculator in the other, calling out to international visitors to change dollars.

The visitors used to be mainly activists supporting the Nicaraguan revolution. Today it is not unusual to also see U.S. businessmen on the street. Most are here to buy seafood from local fishermen. Their numbers have increased since the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) lost the elections in February to the National Opposition Union (UNO), the slate backed by the U.S. government.

U.S. businesses, along with some owned by Canadians or Cuban counterrevolutionary exiles, dominated the lumber, seafood, gold, and sugar industries on the Atlantic Coast until 1979. The tyranny headed by Anastasio Somoza gave them a free hand to exploit both the area's natural resources and its work force.

Unlike the Pacific side of Nicaragua, which is mestizo (Spanish-speaking), the Atlantic is more than 50 percent Indian or Black. In Bluefields, English-speaking Blacks called Creoles are more than a third of the population. Mestizos make up most of the rest, and there are a small number of Miskito and Rama Indians.

Blacks and Indians have historically suffered special forms of racial discrimination within Nicaragua. Moreover, under Somoza they were cut off from working people on the Pacific, since no roads connected the two halves of the country. The Atlantic Coast was the most isolated and undeveloped part of Nicaragua. There were virtually no public schools or hospitals, just private ones run by churches.

Massive uprisings against Somoza, led by the FSLN, began on the Pacific in the late 1970s, culminating in his overthrow in 1979. There was little fighting against Somoza or his National Guard on the Atlantic Coast, where the FSLN was unknown to most workers, peasants, and fishermen.

Many Spanish-speaking FSLN cadres came in from the Pacific to establish a new revolutionary government here after Somoza was toppled. They began building schools and clinics, organized literacy and vaccination brigades, established trade unions, and nationalized the few industries, whose foreign owners had fled.

But the revolutionary programs were frequently implemented without consulting local residents. Political organizations established to draw them into the revolution had limited success because they were based on the experience of the Pacific Coast struggle against Somoza.

1980 demonstrations

Conflicts between the revolutionary government and the local population came to a head in September 1980, when a group of Cuban teachers arrived in town, invited by the Sandinistas to help in the literacy drive. Reactionary elements spread rumors that the Cubans were going to take the jobs of local residents, teach "atheism" to the children, and plunder the town's food supplies.

Demonstrations of several thousand people, most of them Black, broke out against the "Cubans." Sandinista army troops, almost entirely Spanish-speaking and from the Pacific, suppressed the protests.

Ray Hooker, a Black who is political secretary of the FSLN here today, says the troops used racial epithets against the demonstrators, calling them "black sons of bitches" and "monkeys." Protesters were forced to lie face down in the dirt by the soldiers and a number were wounded or arrested. A curfew was imposed.

Johnny Hodgson, also an FSLN leader, was one of the few soldiers on the scene who was Black. While some Blacks were consciously marching against the presence of the Cubans, many others, he explains, poured out onto the streets simply to voice their frustrations with the new government.

The army's response "was a big mistake,"



Militant/Héctor Carrión
Fisherman building boat in Bluefields, a town on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. After long fight for rights, coastal people's autonomy faces erosion.

he says. "It was a military answer, not a political one."

In the North Atlantic, similar errors soon led to an even sharper clash, with thousands of Miskito Indians, encouraged by Washington, taking up arms against the Sandinistas. They were joined by a smaller number of young people from the South Atlantic.

Autonomy project

In late 1984, with Nicaragua engulfed in the contra war financed by the U.S. government, the FSLN reversed its administrative-military approach to the population here. It embraced for the first time a demand of many here that the Atlantic Coast be granted autonomy: the right to decide how the revolution's policies would be implemented on the coast, to determine what would be the official languages, to control the exploitation of natural resources, and to promote the cultures and traditions of the several ethnic groups.

As the FSLN and the Nicaraguan government began mobilizing the local population to fight for autonomy, thousands of Indians and Blacks from towns and remote villages began to be drawn into the revolution. The revolution for them became autonomy, something they identified as not imposed "from Managua" but of their own making.

In Bluefields, more Blacks were appointed to the local government, army, and police; efforts were made to apply affirmative action in jobs and education; bilingual programs were expanded in the schools; and Blacks and Indians were encouraged to develop their cultures.

"The idea of autonomy is not only that you can practice your culture, but feel proud of it," says Hodgson. "It's only recently that we have been able to have people feel proud about what identifies them as a people."

Autonomy opened the door for "Blacks to be actors on the stage for the first time," as Hooker puts it.

A law granting autonomy to the Atlantic Coast was adopted by Nicaragua's National Assembly in September 1987, at the initiative of the FSLN. Following passage of the legislation, residents of the North and South Atlantic were each to elect regional autonomous councils to begin running their own affairs.

The elections for the autonomous councils were postponed, however, and then postponed again after Hurricane Joan devastated the South Atlantic in 1988. They finally occurred in 1990, simultaneously with the presidential elections.

The political parties that make up UNO had opposed autonomy at the time it was originally proposed. According to Hodgson, UNO added autonomy to its platform late in the election campaign, with a call for a "better autonomy" than what the FSLN had promised.

The UNO presidential ticket won 61 percent of the votes in the South Atlantic region, to 34 percent for the FSLN.

A 45-member autonomous council was elected with 22 seats for UNO, 18 for the FSLN, and five for Yatama, a coalition of Indian groups. Although the FSLN had won nearly half the seats, UNO insisted on excluding Sandinistas from the council's executive committee. The executive committee then elected Alvin Guthrie to be the new regional governor of the South Atlantic.

An English-speaking Black, Guthrie grew up in Bluefields and was the head of the seamen's union here. He is general secretary of the Federation of Trade Union Unity (CUS), a Nicaraguan labor group based in Managua with close ties to the AFL-CIO officialdom in the United States. As head of the CUS, Guthrie frequently spoke out against the Nicaraguan revolution over the last decade before trade union bodies in the United States and internationally.

Central government and autonomy

The central government in Managua has thus far denied the South Atlantic council a budget and has established its own ministry for the autonomous regions, headed by ex-contra Brooklyn Rivera, a Miskito Indian. The South Atlantic council voted unanimously to reject the new ministry as a violation of the coast councils' right to decide policy here.

Hooker charges that the central government wants to let autonomy die through "benign neglect."

To defend autonomy, he says the FSLN will fight mainly in the National Assembly to strengthen the original autonomy law and demand the central government live up to it. It will also solicit international aid donations to try to maintain projects initiated during the height of the autonomy struggle.

At a recent national leadership meeting, the FSLN discussed autonomy as part of adopting a major document assessing the Sandinistas' electoral defeat in February. In a section taking up the errors that contributed to the defeat, the document mentions the early disastrous policy the FSLN followed on the coast, but concludes that autonomy "did not modify in any basic way the attitude of the indigenous peoples toward our government, as was demonstrated in the recent elections."

Commenting on the document, Hooker says, "With autonomy, much was accomplished. Without autonomy, much less would have been accomplished. We are insisting that the FSLN at all levels continue to support autonomy."

Pointing to the nationalist explosions in Central Asia against the Soviet government, he explains, "Autonomy continues to be one of the burning issues of our time. Gorbachev doesn't know how to deal with it. We've

taken a few steps in the right direction to try to find a genuine solution to this issue."

Guthrie's union federation, the CUS, opened an office here in May. Aura Lila López and Edwin Alvarez Wilson, members of the CUS staff, say they organize drivers and bakers in Bluefields, plus 15 peasant cooperatives and five fishing co-ops.

One of the main activities of the CUS is making low-interest loans to peasants, fishermen, and small merchants. Given the high unemployment here, estimated at 30 percent to 40 percent, such loans are attractive to many working people desperate to make a living.

CUS staffers Wilson and López argue that things were better for workers here prior to the revolution. "There was full employment when the Americans owned the companies," Wilson says.

The Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) has organized most industrial workers here since the 1979 revolution. It currently has 2,500 members, reports CST leader Róger Barrantes, at the sugar mill, the seafood processing plant, and the sawmill. Barrantes says the CUS has not yet directly challenged the CST at the plants it organizes in the South Atlantic, although CUS organizing drives are confronting the CST in other parts of the country.

Since his election, Guthrie, who lives in Managua, has only visited Bluefields two or three times. His executive secretary, a merchant named Maxwell Atily, runs the regional government in his absence.

In an interview, Atily explains his goal is to attract foreign investment, mainly from the United States. He hopes to convince one U.S. company to set up a shrimp farm in Pearl Lagoon, 30 miles north of here.

Atily is an outspoken opponent of the Nicaraguan revolution, explaining that "it would have been 100 times better to stay with Somoza. He civilized this country."

Art shows and Cubans

There is little evidence, however, that most residents of Bluefields want to return to the days of Somoza.

In July, for example, the regional government tried unsuccessfully to close down an art show featuring paintings by the late June Beer, an artist who was Black and a member of the FSLN.

Leading the charge against the exhibit was César Augusto de la Rocha, the "legal adviser" to the new regional government and a former lawyer for Somoza's National Guard.

De la Rocha tried to declare the art show illegal because a big FSLN flag was displayed next to Beer's works. A debate raged on the local radio station for several days. The sponsoring artists refused to close down the show. Finally, de la Rocha gave up after the artists replaced the large FSLN flag with a small one.

Attitudes toward Cuban volunteers in Bluefields have also changed, especially after 300 Cuban construction workers came here to build houses in the wake of Hurricane Joan (see story on facing page). A group of Cuban doctors remains. They can often be heard late in the afternoon jamming on conga drums with local fishermen.

In the Beholden neighborhood in the Black community, a group of youth, mostly unemployed, say that "autonomy is good. Nicaragua should be more united, but on an equal basis."

One of the young men says during the contra war he "went into the bush," the local Creole expression for taking up arms against the Sandinistas. Another, Spicer Solomon, went to Costa Rica to avoid being drafted into the Sandinista army.

"What we need here is a lot of industry," Solomon says. Because there are no jobs, he and his friends have all signed up at the seamen's union, hoping to get work on a tourist boat sailing out of Miami.

Solomon says autonomy should mean more programs in English and Miskito on the radio and a different curriculum in the schools. Under the Sandinista government, he feels, "most all they taught us in school was about Sandino. They should have taught us our culture." That, he believes, would begin by studying Africa.

Canada: behind struggle of Native peoples is history of racist treatment

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ
AND ROBERT SIMMS
(First of three articles)

MONTRÉAL — The struggle by a small band of Mohawks near Montréal to defend their land has won the support of a majority of working people in Québec and across Canada. This is despite a massive campaign led by capitalist politicians, including Canadian federal Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Harry Swain and Parti Québécois leader Jacques Parizeau. They accuse the Warriors — a grouping among the Mohawks who are organizing barricade defenses in Oka, Québec, to prevent seizure of their land — of being "terrorists" and "criminals."

The broad support for the Native struggle reflects a growing awareness of the long history of racist treatment of Native people in Canada by both federal and provincial governments, and support for the courageous and determined fightback by Natives against their oppression.

Some Native leaders have stressed that the scope and institutionalized character of the oppression of Canada's indigenous peoples have many parallels with that of South Africa's Blacks.

Currently more than 1 million Natives live in Canada, making up 4 percent of Canada's population of 26 million people.

The main thread throughout the modern history of the Native people is the theft of their lands, first by the French and British colonizers, and later by Canada's capitalists through bloody wars, trickery, violation of treaties, and legal maneuvers.

The oppression of the Native peoples stems entirely from the development of capitalism in Canada.

At the beginning of the 17th century, when the first European colonists arrived, there were about 250,000 Indians and Inuit in Canada. The Inuits live in the country's Arctic regions.

Concept of private property

Although the Indians "owned" items of daily use individually, they were totally unfamiliar with the concept of private property in the means of production, especially the land, which is the basis for all forms of private property. Their principal economic activities — hunting, fishing, and in some cases agriculture — were carried out collectively and the products shared collectively. "Sell land? As well sell air and water," said the famous Indian chief and warrior Tecumseh.

The Indians were first drawn into capitalist market relations through the fur trade. As independent commodity producers, they were brutally exploited by the rich merchants and colonial fur monopolies.

But as colonial settlement grew, the Indian peoples had to be deprived of their land. The means used were lethal. In Newfoundland, the colonial settlers totally exterminated the Beothuk tribe.

In eastern Canada, the French fur lords instigated intertribal wars for privileged access to the fur trade and carried out wars themselves against the aboriginal inhabitants, decimating many tribes.

Following Britain's defeat of France in their intercolonial war for control of Canada, a 1763 royal proclamation declared that British colonizers would treat the Indians as an equal, sovereign people with whom they would enter into treaty and buy all land

necessary for settlement. In fact, through fraud, starvation, and military might, Indian land in Ontario was whittled down to a few tiny reserves.

As settlement in Québec, the Maritimes, and Ontario proceeded, growing numbers of farmer-settlers began to resist the prerogatives and dictatorial rule of the British colonial authorities, the rich merchants, and the large landowners, including the Anglican and Catholic church hierarchies. They launched a revolutionary struggle in 1837–38 for cheap land, independence from Britain, and democracy.

Revolutionary democrats seek allies

In Lower Canada, now called Québec, the revolutionary democrats sought allies among the Indians and proclaimed, among other things, that in an independent Canada, Indians "will no longer have to submit to any civil discrimination but will enjoy the same rights as all citizens." The defeat of this bourgeois-democratic and anticolonial revolution left economic development in the hands of the most reactionary capitalist forces in Canada who would use divide-and-rule policies, including the national oppression of Natives and French-speaking people, to maintain their exploitative system.

Confederation in 1867, which united four British colonies in Canada into one country with independent home rule, institutionalized the national oppression of the Québécois, the French-speaking majority in Québec, and of the Acadiens, the French-speaking people in Atlantic Canada. Canada as a prison house of nations was extended to include Native peoples "from sea to sea," the slogan in the Confederation coat of arms that signaled capitalist development and rule to the Pacific Ocean.

To achieve this, Canada's capitalist rulers had to seize all Native lands, save for an insignificant portion, in western Canada.

When all Indian land had been seized, it was open for capitalist development. One corporation, the Canadian Pacific Railway, was given outright 44 million acres of the best farmland in the Prairies. The entire land area of all 2,300 Indian reserves in Canada amounts to less than one seventh of the gift to the CPR — 6 million acres.

The first to feel the brunt of expropriation in western Canada were the Métis, led by Louis Riel, in Manitoba. Although they fought the Canadian army to a standoff in 1870, and won a significant land settlement, government agents and land speculators defrauded the Métis of nearly all their land within a few years.

Seven treaties were signed with Indians from northwestern Ontario to the Rocky Mountains in the next several years. The treaties were a legal facade for the forcible expropriation of Indian land.

First the buffalo herds were exterminated by white hunters. Through starvation and military intimidation, Indian bands were forced into signing away their traditional hunting grounds and becoming wards of the government in small reserves of land.

In 1885 the Cree Indians led by chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear, along with the Métis again led by Riel, rebelled against conditions in the reserves and against being forced into signing a treaty. They were ruthlessly crushed by the Canadian army in the last Indian war in Canada. Riel and other Métis leaders were hung.

The reserves were tiny areas, usually on the least productive land. They were little better than internment camps, unable to provide any viable economy for the Natives. Natives were told to await the "civilizing mission" of Canada's capitalist rulers on these reserves.

The Indian Act, first passed in 1876 and amended with more restrictions to Indian activities later, was a blueprint for the cultural genocide of Native people.

No Indian on the reserve could be a lawyer, doctor, minister, or hold a university degree until after World War II. No alcohol was permitted, on or off the reserve. In the Prairies, a "pass system" was set up that lasted to the 1930s in which Indians could not leave the reserve without the permission of the Indian agent. Prairie Indians were also prohibited

from selling outside these areas produce raised or harvested on the reserve unless they had government approval.

Natives were not allowed to vote in elections for the Canadian Parliament until 1960. Prior to that, the only way an Indian could vote was through a process called "enfranchisement." That involved renouncing "Indian status," which meant being prohibited from residing on a reserve or receiving support derived from treaty rights.

Until the 1950s, and in some cases even later, Indian children were removed from their families on the reserve and taken to church-run residential schools, in order to be removed from the influences of home life, including their native languages, history, and religion. Native languages were forbidden in the schools until even later.

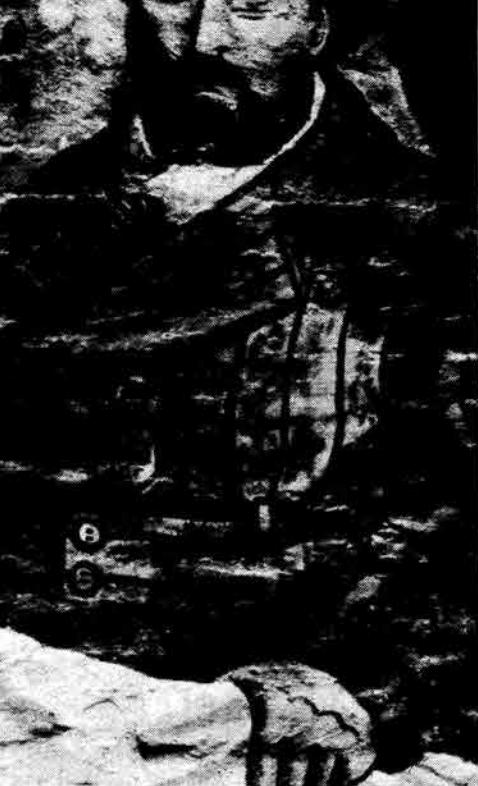
The government outlawed various Native festivals and dances. It established a systematic race system, giving itself the power to decide who was, and was not, an Indian. Until 1985 Indian women who married non-Indians lost their Indian status, as did their children, while parallel treatment was not true for Indian men. Several bizarre, arbitrary, and for the Natives, divisive race classification rulings by government bureaucrats are the result. Some 470,000 Native people are considered "status Indians."

Racism institutionalized

This has been complemented by history courses, TV shows, and movies perpetuating racist stereotypes of Natives as "drunk and lazy" and as "savages."

This institutionalized racism is matched by the discriminatory policies of the employers. First used to unjustly seize the lands of the Native people, racism against Natives today serves to divide the working class and keep a small, but significant pool of cheap labor in the cities and throughout the North as laborers, farm workers, fur trappers, etc. As with national or sex discrimination, all forms of racism serve the bosses' need to force down the wages of all workers and help prevent the working class from uniting and using its combined power to fight exploitation and oppression.

The system of racial oppression against Natives has left them with deplorable living conditions.



Militant/Yvonne Hayes
Louis Riel, who led Métis people in Manitoba in struggle for their land against Canadian army, was hanged along with other Native leaders in 1885.

The unemployment rate among Native people approaches 70 percent. More than 60 percent of Native families live on welfare. Family income is barely half the Canadian average. "We are the poorest of the poor," declared Phil Fontaine, head of the Manitoba Assembly of First Nations.

The life expectancy of Native people is eight years less than average. Infant mortality is more than twice the Canadian average. Their suicide rate is six times the national rate. Twenty-two percent of prison inmates are Native although they are only 4 percent of the population.

Some 40 percent of Native housing lacks central heating and overcrowding is common. Cases of tuberculosis and rickets, rare diseases in developed industrial countries, are frequent on the reserves.

About 45 percent of Natives are functionally illiterate with less than ninth grade schooling compared to 17 percent in the population at large.

Natives are particular victims of environmental pollution as well. Typical is the case of two Cree-Ojibway reserves in Northern Ontario, where pulp mill effluent destroyed the Indians' fishing industry and gave many severe mercury poisoning. It took more than a decade and a half for the Ontario government to come up with compensation.

The Mohawk barricades in Oka are part of a more general revolt by Native people against these types of conditions and the continuing denial of Native land claims.

(To be continued)

Villagers discuss autonomy

Continued from Page 8

is a fisherman and considers himself a staunch opponent of the FSLN. He explained that few boats had come to Pearl Lagoon in the last months to buy shrimp and fish, causing serious problems.

'Mr. Bob'

"It was better under the Sandinista government, at least a boat would come," he admitted. Fax thinks more foreign investment is needed, "like Mr. Bob, who is buying our shrimp to dry and sell to America." A U.S. businessman, "Mr. Bob," arrived 18 months ago. Some fishermen in Pearl Lagoon, while relieved to find a buyer, complained that he paid too little for their efforts.

"I am in favor of autonomy because it helps us make demands," said Fax. He called for a 2 percent tax on all companies who buy fish in Pearl Lagoon, to be used for the needs of the community.

"The Spanish exploited us to build Managua. Creoles and Miskitos should be able to control where we live," said Fax.

"There should be more English radio programs and an English newspaper like the Sandinistas had," he added.

Later at a shack serving beer, several villagers discussed South Africa, Cuba, and autonomy.

"Nelson Mandela fights for all Black people," said an unemployed fisherman, "and Bush doesn't like him."

"That's because he supports Castro," said another man, who disapproved of Cuba.

"The Cubans are tough, look what they did in Grenada and South Africa," the first man rejoined.

The owner of the shack said, "The Americans make you pay if you try to be like Cuba, that's why they made war on the Sandinistas and little Nicaragua. It's not worth it. It's like autonomy, sounds good, but then it doesn't do anything for you."

"Autonomy is like everything, you fight and win, but you have to keep fighting or they take it away," replied one of the fishermen.

FROM PATHFINDER

Genocide Against the Indians: Its Role in the Rise of U.S. Capitalism

By George Novack

This 32-page pamphlet is available for \$2 from Pathfinder bookstores listed in the directory on page 12 or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include \$1 for shipping and handling.

Art director: 'stakes high in censorship case'

BY RONI McCANN

The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and its director Dennis Barrie will stand trial September 24 on obscenity charges brought against them for exhibiting the works of photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. It will be the first time a gallery in the United States is prosecuted for the content of the work displayed in it, and Barrie will be the first director to stand trial over an exhibition.

"The stakes in this case are very high," Barrie said in a telephone interview from Cincinnati. "If we lose, this opens the door to a dangerous situation. All museums could face such censorship and demands that certain works be taken off the walls."

The CAC and Barrie were indicted by a Hamilton County grand jury in April on two misdemeanor counts each of "pandering obscenity" and "illegal use of a child in nudity-related material." The charges stem from a showing of the exhibit "Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment." The exhibit includes 175 photographs, most of which are

studies of flowers and celebrity portraits. Seven depict homoerotic images.

The prosecution contends that these photographs are pornography, not art, and is attempting to separate the seven from the remaining 168. Defense attorneys argue that singling out only the disputed photographs would be like judging a play by only a few scenes.

"It is the related work of an artist from beginning to end," said H. Louis Sirkin, one of the defense lawyers. "It was put together for a reason and should stay together." On August 20 Judge David Albanese will rule on the prosecution's motion to separate the seven photographs.

If convicted on the obscenity charges, Barrie faces up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$2,000. The center faces fines of up to \$10,000.

Widespread support

From the opening day of the Mapplethorpe exhibit, when Cincinnati police enraged viewers by closing down the CAC for an

hour to videotape the photographs, support for the right of Barrie and the CAC to show the work has been widespread. Large numbers of people and organizations, seeing the action against the exhibit as an attack on First Amendment rights to freedom of expression, have backed Barrie and the art center.

"We received thousands of letters and statements of support," said Barrie, commenting on "the quality and beauty of the show." While the exhibition was on, April 7 to May 26, "the center received numerous telephone calls, messages, and financial donations for the defense in the many thousands of dollars — contributions of \$10 to \$1,000 — from individuals." Barrie also said thousands of people signed petitions supporting the National Endowment for the Arts, a federally funded grant foundation that partially financed the Mapplethorpe show.

The exhibit is now on its way to Boston, after a record-breaking attendance of more than 81,000 viewers. "We did not receive one complaint about the exhibit," said the CAC director, "and even with it gone, a few letters of support continue to come in each day."

"In addition we've received hundreds of invitations to speak all over the country at universities, museums, bar associations, city club forums, and groups," said Barrie. He explained the CAC has also sought support from art foundations and individuals who support the arts. "We've been successful with many of these foundations, and their support for this fight," he said, "gives us the confidence to press on."

This support is crucial, Barrie explained, because the CAC does not have the resources to wage the fight on its own.

National agenda

The attack on the CAC is part of a nationally networked campaign, said Barrie, that

in part began in Cincinnati as procensorship groups targeted the city authorities and elected officials to take action against the Mapplethorpe show.

"Museums are not just preservers of the past but centers of higher learning," said Barrie. "If you cut out the right of museums to show works of art that are controversial, you limit freedom of expression."

"The procensorship groups and individuals, such as [North Carolina Senator Jesse] Helms and [Donald] Wildmon, are willing to compromise these rights to freedom of expression and limit them based on their views."

"But either you protect these rights or not," said Barrie, including the right to view art in a museum.

One of the many organizations that sent the CAC and Barrie a message of support for the fight against censorship was Friends of the Pathfinder Mural, a group that publicizes and defends the six-story Pathfinder Mural in New York. The mural depicts revolutionary and working-class fighters from around the globe, many of whose writings are published by Pathfinder Press, and was painted by more than 100 artists.

Barrie thanked the group and its executive director, Meryl Lynn Farber, for their support in a June 6 letter. "Freedom of expression is one of the rights Americans hold most dear," he wrote. "Freedom for individuals to make their own choices about what books they read and what performances and art they see is a principle that sets us apart from other nations where dictators decide what is appropriate for their people."

"We will stand our ground," Barrie continued. "We must not allow the arts to be censored and will continue our battle in court."

Cuba treats 'Chernobyl children'

BY RICH STUART

HAVANA, Cuba — By the white sandy beach on the Caribbean, a group of children enjoy the recreational and sports facilities of the José Martí Pioneer City on the outskirts of town.

They are some of the 1,400 children who have arrived in Cuba's capital since March 29 from the area where the Chernobyl nuclear disaster occurred four years ago. The children are aged two to 16 and the youngest have come accompanied by their mothers. They are from the parts of the Soviet republics of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia, that were most affected by the radiation from the nuclear plant explosion. The accident was the most serious at a nuclear facility anywhere in the world.

On August 1 the Ukrainian parliament voted to close the Chernobyl power site, and to work on a new energy program that could eliminate nuclear power.

The group of children is the first to arrive in Cuba, with up to 10,000 expected in September. The Cuban government has converted part of the Pioneer camp for their accommodations and medical care. The Cuban Pioneers, the children's mass organization here, turned over the camp to the Soviet children.

Cuba is paying for the cost of the project, which will have the capacity to treat up to 50,000 youths.

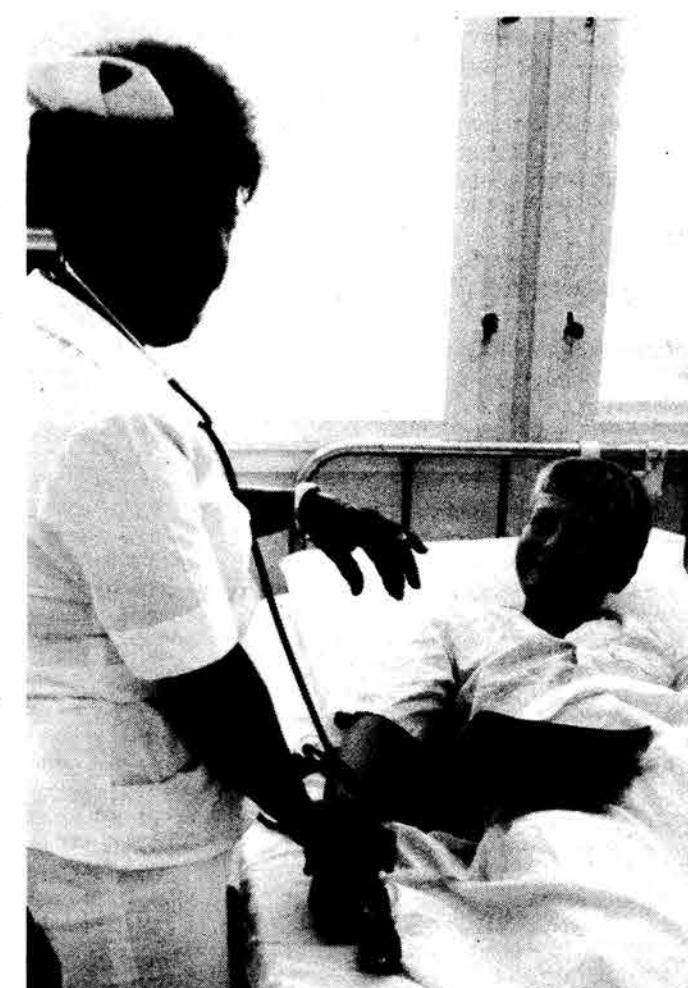
"Children are children," said Julio Espinoza, the director of the camp, as he explained why the Cuban government was spending considerable resources to treat the children. Espinoza said the youth will be examined in medical facilities here and will receive any medical treatment necessary, including surgery, in Havana hospitals by

pediatric specialists.

The camp director explained that the Cuban project to care for the "Chernobyl children" is unmatched in the world, including by the wealthy countries of Western Europe or the United States.

The Pioneer camp provides the basic medical exams. The first are done in the family doctor clinics by pediatricians, psychologists, hygienists, and internal medicine specialists, followed by whatever treatment is needed in one of the three hospitals in the camp. Then, if necessary, the treatment is followed up in a more specialized hospital in Havana.

"Cuba is the only country helping us like this," said a 14-year-old girl from Byelorussia playing on the beach.



Militant/Rich Stuart
Nurse visits victim of the nuclear disaster

W. Virginia foremen face jail in attack on strike activists

BY MARVIN CARPENTER,
CARL WILES, AND DOUG HORD

FAIRMONT, West Virginia — Two foremen for Asplundh Tree Expert Co. are in custody and are facing first-degree murder and attempted murder charges stemming from an armed attack on supporters of a strike against the company. A third Asplundh official, who is a general foreman and close relative of a top Asplundh regional official, remains at large.

William "Wink" Sattler was the main target of the Asplundh officials' attack. Although not a striker himself, he is a supporter of striking International Union of Electronic

Garment bosses in New York push back union organizing drive

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

BROOKLYN — Garment workers in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn recently suffered a setback in their year-long effort to break the hold of a company union over 5,000 knitwear workers. They were seeking representation by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

A motion by prounion workers to affiliate the company union, Local 17-18, to the ILGWU was defeated July 11 by a substantial majority of those voting. A two-thirds majority would have been necessary to carry the motion.

That the election was held at all, however, is a reflection of the strength of the ILGWU organizing drive. Workers obtained a court order to force Local 17-18 to organize the vote after they filed hundreds of signature cards with the National Labor Relations Board requesting a union representation election.

Although the election was well-publicized by both the union and the company in radio and TV ads, only about 1,200 workers out of 5,000 eligible to vote in the elections turned out.

The capacity of the company to mobilize workers to vote against the union was a surprise to ILGWU supporters.

The company mobilized mostly older workers — Eastern European Jews and some Blacks and Puerto Ricans — many of whom had not worked in shops targeted by the union. This was an attempt to divide these workers from the mostly young Latino and Caribbean workers who came out to vote for the ILGWU.

Prounion workers and ILGWU organizers are now exploring the possibility of organizing Williamsburg factories on a shop-by-shop basis, rather than concentrating on organizing all the Local 17-18 shops at the same time.

"At least that way, we'd know the other people voting," explained an ILGWU organizer.

Marea Himelgrin is a garment worker in New York and a member of ILGWU Local 89.

Workers Local 756 that organizes the tree trimmers.

Wink caught ten .22 and .38 caliber slugs in his body. The teeth in the upper right side of his jaw are all broken off from when they stuck a gun in his mouth and pulled the trigger as he lay wounded on the ground. Fortunately, the gun was either empty or misfired. The attack occurred in the parking lot of a bar in the central West Virginia town of Birch River over the Memorial Day weekend. The attackers were driving an Asplundh tree-trimming truck.

Sattler, like tens of thousands of others, moved back to West Virginia in the mid-1970s. While living in Erie, Pennsylvania, he had been president of a large United Auto Workers local at a Kaiser Aluminum plant there. Since the beginning of the Asplundh strike he has convinced a dozen or so workers, including some of his own relatives in the immediate Nicholas and Clay County area, to quit scabbing on the IUE strike. That's what made him a target, he explained in an interview.

Elvin Moore, a friend of Sattler's in town from Sissonville for the holiday weekend, was killed in the attack. Mike Brown, a laid-off union coal miner who was with them, escaped injury.

IUE Local 756 has been on strike against Asplundh's steep concession demands for more than seven months across the northern and north-central part of West Virginia. Standing behind Asplundh is the giant Monongahela Power Co. The tree-trimming outfit clears growth from around the company's power lines.

A similar strike against Asplundh in the southern part of the state was settled favorably for the IUE in May.

Tom Preston, a strike leader here in the Fairmont area, related in an open letter to Asplundh and Mon Power that scabs "were told they would have to fight for their jobs if they wanted to keep them. Asplundh encouraged these strike breakers to arm themselves and to confront the strikers." In an interview here, Preston stressed that these are not idle charges, that the union has proof.

Asplundh and Mon Power's stance led to inevitable confrontations. After one fight on the picket line, nine strikers were arrested on felony charges of "malicious wounding" and "aiding and abetting." The media portrayed the confrontation as an unprovoked attack by the tree trimmers against scabs. This, coupled with the bail bond conditions imposed by the judge on the nine, have weakened the strike.

The trials of the victimized IUE members began earlier this month. One of them, Leland Ramsey, Jr., has been convicted of assault and faces one to five years in jail.

Strike supporters are holding weekly protests outside Mon Power's main office here in Fairmont.

Marvin Carpenter and Carl Wiles are two of the nine striking members of IUE Local 756 standing trial. Doug Hord is a member of United Steelworkers Local 1640 in Fairmont.

— CALENDAR —

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Justice for Rick Rankins and Ronnie Barlow, Victims of Racism. Speak-out. Sat., Aug. 18, 7:30 p.m. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (602) 279-5850.

CONNECTICUT

Hartford

Commemorate the 5th Anniversary of the Arrests of the Puerto Rico/Hartford 15. Speakers: Nelson Ramírez, ex-political prisoner, Comité Afirmación Puertorriqueña; representative of National Liberation Movement; representative of Puerto Rico/Hartford 15 Defense. Thurs., Aug. 30. Food and music, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Centro Juan Antonio Corretjer, 138 Jefferson St. (near Hartford Hospital). Sponsor: Connecticut Committee Against Repression and the Centro Juan Antonio Corretjer. For more information call (203) 233-7996 or 296-3963.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Eastern Strikers Closer to Victory than Ever. Speaker: Sara Johnston, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100-A. Sat., Aug. 18, 7 p.m. 545 W Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (312) 829-6815 or 829-7018.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

The Fight for Puerto Rican Independence. Sat., Aug. 18, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

Kansas City

Eyewitness Reports from El Salvador. Speakers: Eileen Rudzinski, Salvador Faith Accompaniment Committee; Delany Dean, member of delegation to El Salvador; K.C. Ellis, Socialist Workers Party, member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 576. Sat., Aug. 18, 7 p.m. 5534 Troost. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (816) 444-7880.

Has World Capitalism Suffered a Defeat in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? Speaker: Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Aug. 25, 7 p.m. 5534 Troost. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (816) 444-7880.

St. Louis

The Strike Against Eastern. Sat., Aug. 25, 7:30 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (314) 361-0250.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Independence for Puerto Rico. Speaker: Selva Nebbia, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 15th C.D.; Consuela Corretjer, Office of Information for the Independence of Puerto Rico. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Aug. 18, 7:30 p.m. 464 Bergen. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (718) 398-6983.

BRITAIN

London

The Reunification of Germany. Speaker: Jim Gordon, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 24, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: Militant Forum. Tel: 71-928-7947.

UN affirms position on Puerto Rico

Continued from Page 2

of the Puerto Rican people. It aims to dilute international pressure and to give the impression that a process of decolonization has taken place."

The vice-president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), Fernando Martín, also denounced the U.S. plans to impose a plebiscite. The main proindependence party in Puerto Rico, the PIP has joined in supporting the call for a plebiscite with the Popular Democratic Party and the New Progressive Party (PNP). The ruling Popular Democrats favor the commonwealth status quo; the PNP supports Puerto Rico becoming the 51st state of the United States.

The representative of the Pro-Free Associated State Organization (PROELA) explained that his group promotes an "ideal of autonomy" that is an alternative to colonial rule.

Several proponents of U.S. statehood for Puerto Rico also spoke before this session of the UN committee.

Zaida Hernández, who is a PNP member of the House of Representatives in Puerto Rico, defended the statehood position as anti-colonialist. She said, that "Our present territorial or colonial condition called the Free Associated State, prevents us from fully enjoying our citizenship and puts us in an unequal and disadvantageous position."

An important component of the participants and observers at the hearing were a

number of Puerto Rican freedom fighters who have spent time in U.S. jails because of their activity in support of independence for Puerto Rico. Among those testifying were Dora García and Filiberto Ojeda — both of whom served time on frame-up charges in U.S. jails. The United Committee Against Repression and for Defense of Political Prisoners (UCRE) made a presentation at the proceedings.

Also testifying was Selva Nebbia, representing the Socialist Workers Party. Nebbia is the SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in the 15th C.D. in New York. She pointed to the new rise of labor struggles in Puerto Rico, as workers on the island resist attempts to privatize public services, and to the growing links being forged between workers in Puerto Rico and working people in the United States.

Other organizations that argued for the approval of the resolution reaffirming Puerto Rico's right to self-determination were the Puerto Rican National Ecumenical Movement, Puerto Rican Bar Association, Steering Committee for a Socialist Front Against the Plebiscite, Albizuista Committee, Puerto Rican Association of University Professors, and several Puerto Rican Masonic lodges.

Representatives from the Center for Constitutional Rights, National Lawyers Guild, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, and the Breton Law Society of New York also spoke for the resolution.

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Militant Labor Forums

U.S. Troops Out of the Mideast! Hands Off Iraq!

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Speaker: Eli Green, Socialist Workers Party candidate for state insurance commissioner, oil refinery worker. Sat., Aug. 25, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

MINNESOTA

Austin

Sun., Aug. 26, 7 p.m. 407½ N Main St. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (507) 433-3461.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Speakers: Georges Mehrabian, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 10th C.D., member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-575; others. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Speakers: Don Rojas, chairperson, New York

1990 Socialist Workers Campaign; others. Sat., Aug. 25, 7 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

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Harry Ring

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"If you don't fly Eastern, Marty Shugrue will make more of those stupid commercials."

Greyhound, anyone? — In a

surprise check at the Manhattan depot of strikebound Greyhound, federal inspectors yanked 60 buses out of service — 38 lacked inspection certificates and 22 failed safety inspections. Since the strike, 46 percent of Greyhound buses failed initial inspection compared to 8 percent for the same period last year.

Greyhound, anyone?? — A New York-to-Montréal Greyhound bus was destroyed by fire when a scab driver kept the bus going despite a flat tire. The flames gutted the bus and burned up most of the baggage.

Greyhound, anyone??? — All 14 passengers were injured, some seriously, when a Greyhound bus

bound for Buffalo from New York City skidded off the road and turned over. It was raining and, apparently, the scab driver was going too fast on the wet road.

Orderly transition — British authorities prosecuted leaders of Hong Kong's first fledgling party for using a bullhorn during a human rights sit-in, and for collecting funds in violation of a 1933 ordinance. The prosecution came after China, scheduled to take over in 1997, demanded action against Hong Kong "subversives."

Could be a problem — The feds are weighing a cleanup of the radioactive and toxic wastes at government nuclear weapons plants.

Ponders cleanup director Leo Duffy, "We are going to have hundreds of millions of cubic yards of material that has to go somewhere and we don't have any place to put it."

That much he knows — He may be stumped on where to dump lethal waste, but when asked where the money would come from for the projected \$200 billion cleanup, Duffy responded without hesitation, "From the taxpayers."

Inflation, you know — In 1985 some folks were astonished when the U.S. Navy paid \$640 apiece for airplane toilet seat covers. Now the air force is paying just under \$1,900 for the toilet lids. The Pentagon is also shelling out \$67.50 apiece for rubber

gaskets to make airplane toilets watertight. Critics assert \$1 plug-type seals perform the same function.

How about dead politicians? — Booed down by the public, Milwaukee official Anthony Zielinski dropped his economy proposal to sell the organs of dead welfare recipients, with or without permission, and cremate instead of burying them. "If they can't help society while they're alive," he philosophized, "maybe they can help it while they're dead."

It's that bad? — "The Royal Family is the greatest asset this country has." — Margaret Thatcher, arguing for a \$5-million-a-year raise for Queen Elizabeth II.

Socialist candidate condemns U.S. war moves

Continued from front page

Bush claimed to be assisting Saudi Arabian King Fahd's government "in the defense of its homeland." But under the thin veneer of this justification, Washington clearly intends to go to war to protect the interests of Big Oil and to impose its will on Iraq and the Arab peoples.

In an attempt to extend the illegal military blockade, Bush also threatened to seal off Jordan's port of Aqaba because it is a "hole through which commerce flows" to Iraq. The number of U.S. military personnel in the region could reach 250,000, administration officials said. So extensive is the troop deployment that Washington is considering mobilizing reservists for the first time since the 1968 U.S. escalation of the Vietnam War. Commercial airlines, including strike-bound Eastern Airlines, are ferrying troops to Saudi Arabia.

Exploitation of resources for Big Oil

The U.S. rulers are attempting to make it clear to the Arab peoples that the region's resources should be exploited for the benefit

of Big Oil, not controlled by the people of the Middle East in the interest of all humanity.

Working people in the United States will not benefit from the military occupation but will bear the burden of Washington's war moves. Workers in uniform could be thrown into combat to maintain the profits of the big oil monopolies. Working people will be pitted against workers and peasants in the region who have fought for decades to be free from

Workers in uniform could be thrown into combat to defend big oil monopolies.

colonial domination and the imperial yoke.

The energy monopolies didn't waste a second to hike prices on fuel, gouging working people while lining their own pockets, regardless of the devastating impact of the price rise throughout the world.

The massive military mobilization follows in the pattern of previous U.S. interventions. Where it believes it can get away with it —

as it did when invading Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989 — the U.S. government will use military force to crush resistance to neo-colonial domination.

For decades the entire Middle East was dominated by big colonial powers that divided up the region. With the discovery of oil, and the resulting enormous wealth that poured into the coffers of the oil companies, control was maintained by crushing nationalist uprisings through the use of military force.

Washington sent troops to Lebanon in 1958 and again in 1982, and other imperialist countries have done likewise. The U.S. government has economically and militarily propped up the Israeli regime, which serves as a regional cop against the aspirations of Arab workers and peasants. Bloody aggression has been carried out by the Israeli government in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere.

Among the strongest defenders of Iraq against the U.S. war moves are the Palestinian people, many of whom live in countries throughout the region after being driven out of their homeland by the Israeli settler regime. Inside Israel, and in territories annexed

through several wars, Palestinians live under a military occupation force.

In Egypt, Iran, and Iraq, imperialist-backed monarchies were toppled by popular revolts. Still, in the 1990s, many countries and sheikdoms in this part of the world are run by semifeudal monarchies — reactionary regimes that are maintained by and serve the interests of their big-business clients.

The vast majority of the oppressed peoples in the Middle East, including both those who have overthrown monarchies and those who have not, shed no tears at the overturn of the Kuwaiti emirs. The small clique of Kuwaiti ruling families were simply running an oil drilling operation for the imperialists on a piece of land dominated by imperialism.

The massive armada being assembled in the region and the tens of thousands of combat-ready troops who will be stationed there demonstrate the response by the U.S. rulers to peoples who seek to break out of the confines of the old social and economic order dominated by imperialism.

Far from entering into a period of world peace, the U.S. government is showing once again it will resort to war, terror, and force when big-business interests are challenged.

My campaign supporters and I, along with SWP candidates across the country, are getting out the truth as broadly as possible — through sales of the *Militant*, public meetings, and discussions on the job. We are also joining protests where they are organized.

Working people, farmers, students, and others can effectively protest these U.S. war moves by explaining the facts of the struggles of the Arab peoples and why going to war for the owners of Exxon and other oil companies is not in the interests of working people anywhere.

Curtis committee wins round against suit

Continued from front page

the woman Curtis was alleged to have assaulted, are now suing him for damages.

A judgment against Curtis would be a life-long financial burden on him and his wife Kate Kaku. Both are packinghouse workers and the couple has no financial assets or property.

On August 3 Judge Gamble granted a request by Stuart Pepper, the Morris' attorney, that Terrell be required to testify about the Mark Curtis Defense Committee's finances. Gamble said the testimony was necessary to establish whether the committee's funds belonged to Curtis and could be used to pay damages to the Morris.

Curtis gave testimony from prison via videotape after the July 9 trial in the lawsuit. Under questioning by Pepper and his own attorney, Curtis established that he is not an officer of the defense committee and does not control its activities or the way it spends its funds. The Iowa attorney general intervened in the lawsuit prior to the trial and prevented Curtis from being moved to Des Moines to attend the proceeding.

Following Gamble's August 3 decision requiring Terrell to testify, the defense committee retained Bennett, a well-known constitutional rights attorney and general counsel for the Iowa Civil Liberties Union.

'Threat to voluntary association'

"This attempt to use the lawsuit against Curtis to attack the defense committee is a serious challenge to the right of thousands of unionists, political activists, and human rights supporters from all over the world who have come together to back and contribute to the defense effort," said John Studer, coordinator of the defense committee, in an interview. "It poses a threat to our defense committee and to all those who come together in any voluntary political association to advance a common cause."

Studer asserted that the attack on the defense committee is a threat to other defense campaigns as well, "from the National Alli-

ance Against Racist and Political Repression and others working to win freedom for Johnny Imani Harris, to those defending Leonard Peltier and Joseph Doherty. It is a challenge to a long and important tradition of people coming together internationally to fight to reverse injustice," he added.

The same day Bennett went before Judge Gamble, Kate Kaku arrived in Geneva, Switzerland. She is leading an international delegation to the United Nations Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities as part of a long-term effort to bring Curtis' fight before the UN Commission on Human Rights. Supporters from Britain, Canada, France, and Sweden, and the United States are participating in the delegation.

The August 6-31 meeting of the subcommission will decide which cases of human rights abuses from around the world will be referred to the 1991 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Kaku and Studer received official delegate credentials to address the panel comprised of 18 human rights officials. The credentials were conferred by the Indigenous World Association, a nongovernmental organization whose participation in these meetings has been approved by the UN.

Following the subcommission session, Kaku and Studer will travel to Paris and London to discuss the current status of the Curtis fight with supporters. They will also meet with the Americas Research Department of Amnesty International. Curtis has asked Amnesty International to adopt him as a prisoner of conscience.

The defense committee has launched a special \$20,000 fund to cover the costs of the delegation's travel, housing, and expenses. Contributions are urgently needed and should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Checks for tax deductible contributions should be made out to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc. and earmarked for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

Messages of solidarity with the defense committee against the court's intrusion into its affairs are also urgently needed. This violation of the right to privacy and voluntary political association needs an immediate response from all supporters of democratic rights, Studer said. Messages should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee at the address above.

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

Aug. 29, 1980

Poland's biggest strike wave in a decade has rocked the government of President Edward Gierek. Tens of thousands of workers have shut down some 170 factories in the Baltic Sea port cities of Gdansk, Gdynia, and Sopot. The driving force in the struggle is the 17,000 workers at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, who have taken over the yard and turned it into an organizing center for the struggle.

The shipyard workers halted work on August 13. Their action was sparked by the firing of a woman worker who had played a role in leading earlier struggles.

Their demands initially centered on a \$66-a-month wage increase to match price rises and recognition of their right to form a union independent of the Gierek government. But the demands have expanded to include a wide range of democratic and economic rights, among them:

- Guarantee of the right to strike and security for all strikers.
- Freedom of expression in word and print, and abolition of censorship.
- Release of all political prisoners.
- Right to establish free trade unions.
- Access by all religious groups to the mass media.
- Abolition of privileges for security ser-

vices by granting equal family allowances for all. Liquidation of special shops.

• Full supplies on the domestic market. Only surplus commodities should be exported.

• Guarantee of automatic salary increases following increases in prices or devaluation of the currency.

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interests of the Working People

Aug. 23, 1965

Price 10c

LOS ANGELES — The social explosion that rocked this city's Black ghetto for nearly a week was the biggest uprising of U.S. Negroes in the 20th century. It was ignited by unendurable white racist oppression.

Touched off by the strong-arm methods of two cops arresting a 21-year-old youth on charges of alleged drunken driving, the outbreak was met by savage police repression. Of the 33 reported dead, 29 are Black people, victims of trigger-happy cops and National Guardsmen. So far, 3,352 residents of the Watts ghetto have been jailed and are being held on punitively high bail.

The fires set off during the outbreak have left many Negroes homeless.

The mood of rebellion is expressed in the slogan popularized in recent months by a local disc jockey, "Burn, baby, burn!"

Oil profiteers' price rip-off

On August 2, just hours after Iraqi forces rolled into Kuwait, world oil prices soared as capitalist rulers internationally seized on the toppling of the Kuwaiti monarchy to jack up energy industry profits.

Prices of crude oil jumped between \$1.50 and \$3.50 a barrel within 24 hours. In the United States prices were hiked at every stage of the oil pipeline — from the refinery to the corner gas station. In the Detroit area, for example, one-third of all service stations had added at least a nickel to the price of a gallon of gasoline. In Florida, gasoline prices jumped as much as 15 cents.

Long before the embargo of Iraq or any announced shortage of crude oil, the overt, gross price gouging began. Northwest Airlines announced plans to tack an \$8 "fuel surcharge" on all tickets. Long Island Light Company published a letter to its customers in the *New York Times* stating that while reserves are good, the prices of electricity is sure to go up. From trucking to public utilities companies, everyone is cashing in on the price increase bonanza.

This extortion has nothing to do with the supply of oil. The August 3 *Wall Street Journal* admitted there is still "a world oil glut" and U.S. reserves are "unusually high." This doesn't affect the price increases they said, which are largely based on "a change in market psychology."

While denying charges of profiteering, when asked by reporters for the *Journal* to explain the pricing process, oil company spokespersons declined comment. A spokesman for one wholesaler said they hiked prices to protect their regular customers by allocating supplies. In the United States alone, a five-cent-a-gallon increase on gasoline means \$16.3 million more a day in the pockets of petroleum companies.

What it all boils down to is a mass rip-off of working people in the name of yet another fuel crisis.

In Third World countries — already burdened by growing, unpayable foreign debts — the worldwide price gouging

has an even more devastating impact. In Peru this escalation of oil prices coincided with a stiff belt-tightening program by the new administration of Alberto Fujimori. The minimum monthly wage in the country is \$15, and a third of its 22 million people already live in poverty.

Just eight days after Iraqi troops entered Kuwait, gas prices in Peru soared overnight from 13 cents to \$4 a gallon. This came on top of jumps in food prices and other products. On August 10 Peru's central bank issued a new high-denomination note. The bill that had been the highest, the 500,000 inti note, is now worth \$1.66.

In Chile the mining minister announced August 7 that prices of oil by-products would increase due to the events in the Persian Gulf. Chile will spend an additional \$250 million to import crude oil at prices jacked up 30 percent, and these hikes would then have to be passed on to distributors and working people, the minister stated. In Sub-Saharan Africa higher prices for needed oil imports will make already unbearable conditions for toilers there even worse.

This latest attempt by capitalists to squeeze more out of the labor of workers and peasants in Third World countries underlines the need for working people to demand the already-excruciating foreign debt be canceled.

Trade unions should demand immediate cost-of-living increases for workers to help make up for the rising costs. Unions, farmers' organizations, and neighborhood groups should call on the oil barons to open their books.

Most importantly working people should call for a halt to Washington's intervention in the Middle East, which is not on the side of the majority of toilers there and is not in the interests of workers and farmers in this country who are left with higher prices and the threat of tens of thousands of young men and women being shipped off to war.

U.S. hands off the Middle East!

Hands off Curtis committee!

An assault on the right to political association free of government interference and the right to privacy has opened up in an attack against the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. The committee's treasurer is being dragged into court as part of a lawsuit against Mark Curtis. Opponents of labor frame-ups, supporters of civil liberties, and others should immediately join in an effort to defend the committee.

First some background. Curtis, a unionist and political activist, was framed in 1988 by Des Moines, Iowa, police on rape and burglary charges. No physical evidence was presented at his criminal trial to back the charges, and testimony that Curtis was elsewhere at the time of the alleged rape went unchallenged by the prosecution. The woman's description of her attacker did not match Curtis' features.

Violations of Curtis' constitutional rights permeated the trial, including preventing him from challenging the testimony of the cop who said he caught him with his pants down. The cop has a history of lying on arrest reports. Curtis was convicted and is now serving a 25-year term in an Iowa state prison.

Last year, Keith and Denise Morris, the parents of the woman Curtis allegedly assaulted, filed suit against him for financial damages. The judge ruled in June — before the trial even opened — that Curtis' criminal conviction established his guilt and liability. The proceeding was stacked against him from the start. The only thing for the court to decide was how large the judgment would be.

On July 5 — four days before the trial — the Iowa attorney general's office pressed for, and got, a ruling from the judge in the case that prevented Curtis from appearing and testifying in court. The judge instead approved videotaping testimony from Curtis in prison and set August 10 for final arguments.

On August 3 the judge widened the scope of the suit's attack, agreeing to a motion by the Morrises' attorney and ordering the Curtis defense committee's treasurer to testify about its finances. The judge claimed the step was necessary to establish whether the committee's funds can be used to pay any damages ordered against Curtis.

The defense committee is a voluntary association of people seeking to right the injustices against Curtis. They raise funds for the best legal defense possible and publicize the case internationally to win support.

Curtis is not an officer of the group. He does not determine its activities or the way it spends its money. The defense committee has no legal or financial obligation to Curtis. The group, its activities, and its funds are irrelevant to the proceedings in the lawsuit against Curtis. It is a third party now being dragged into the litigation.

These developments are exposing a central purpose of the lawsuit. Both Curtis and his wife Kate Kaku are packinghouse workers. Neither have financial assets or property. A severe financial judgment against Curtis would saddle the couple with an intolerable burden for life.

The lawsuit is aimed at breaking Curtis, who has main-

tained his innocence and political beliefs and remains an activist in prison. It is also aimed at breaking Kaku, a leader of the defense committee, and driving a wedge between them.

The lawsuit squares with a countercampaign launched against the Curtis defense effort by an antilabor outfit called the Workers League. It has aggressively peddled the frame-up story that the cops, prosecutor, and attorney general have had a hard time selling. It blatantly disregards facts, asserts that Curtis is guilty, and claims that his supporters are victimizing the Morrises as a Black working-class family.

The prospect of financial hardship and an international smear campaign have not, however, shut up Curtis, Kaku, and their supporters. Proof of this is the credentials won recently that allow Kaku to speak on Curtis' fight before a United Nation's human rights subcommission meeting this month. This is a victory in the long-term fight to get the UN Commission on Human Rights to take up the case.

Now through the Morris lawsuit, Curtis' supporters have come under attack. The court's attempt to intrude into the affairs and finances of the defense committee is a direct assault on basic civil liberties: the right to political association free of government interference, and the right to privacy.

These liberties are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and have been strengthened by court rulings stemming from battles by civil rights organizations in the 1960s. The Socialist Workers Party's victory in 1989 over a 10-year disruption lawsuit financed and organized by the Workers League also strengthened these rights. The suit attempted to get a federal court to determine the membership and leadership of the party.

The attack against the defense committee is a dagger aimed at all efforts to defend victims of frame-ups and injustice. If successful, it could undermine the rights and political elbowroom of all working-class organizations to function freely.

The defense committee is fighting back and deserves the widest possible support. Mark Bennett, a noted constitutional rights attorney and general counsel for the Iowa Civil Liberties Union, has agreed to take up the fight on behalf of the committee. Bennett and the defense committee quickly scored a victory August 13 delaying testimony from the committee's treasurer and winning time to get a protective order barring unconstitutional intrusions into the committee's affairs and finances.

Curtis supporters now have two immediate tasks: mobilizing an international outpouring of solidarity messages defending the committee's rights, and responding quickly to the committee's appeal for the \$20,000 needed to send an international delegation to the UN human rights subcommission meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

These campaigns can have an impact on the political relationship of forces in Iowa and have the potential to push back those who want to keep Curtis behind bars.

Capitalism saps both nature and labor

BY DOUG JENNESS

In his letter on the facing page, Will Wilkin poses some important questions that are undoubtedly on the minds of other readers. And in the next two issues I'll be addressing some of them. Far from thinking that the destruction of the environment is "a subordinate or trendy issue," we believe this is a critical problem of great concern to working people worldwide.

Wilkin accurately notes that environmental destruction occurred before capitalism existed. He could have added that it has also been devastating to the health and welfare

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

of the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where the capitalists have been expropriated.

This does not mean, however, that class structure and conflicts aren't the framework for viewing environmental degradation and determining what can be done about it. But before taking this up, it is useful to step back and take a look at the origins of the processes that have led to such disastrous consequences for the land, air, and water we need for our livelihoods.

The key is the relationship between nature and labor. Human beings have a very different relationship to nature than all other species. Our kind evolved as toolmakers, who are not simply nature's consumers, but producers who consciously alter and master nature.

We're part of nature — we need air and water like other living creatures, and we have instincts rooted in our biological origin. But we're also separate, because through changing nature with our labor we have changed our social relations. We have a social history, as well as a natural history.

As toolmakers our capacity to alter nature has continually increased. In the earliest agricultural societies, humankind often used slash-and-burn methods or resorted to overgrazing that led to deforestation and soil erosion. When food could no longer be produced, people moved on.

In the subsequent development of society from slavery through feudalism to capitalism, the refashioning of nature has not only permitted human beings to increase the productivity of their labor. It has led to unanticipated ill effects, which have become more dangerous as technology has advanced. Frederick Engels, who along with Karl Marx helped put communism on a scientific footing, pointed out that we shouldn't "flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquests over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us. Each of them, it is true, has in the first place the consequences on which we counted, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects, which only too often cancel out the first."

This was written at the time of steam power — before coal-fired or nuclear-generated electrical power and the big developments in the chemical industry that have given us detergents, pesticides, herbicides, and a multitude of non-biodegradable synthetic materials.

Pollution of the air, land, and water and contamination of our food occurs as part of the process of changing nature through labor. It's either the byproducts or the products themselves that are detrimental to the environment and our health. Workers and farmers, who are the producers in our society, are right at the center of where pollution begins. But we aren't to blame. We are wage slaves and debt slaves to the capitalist exploiters. We don't make the decisions about how things are produced; they do.

The capitalists make the decisions on the basis of maximizing their profit rates. No capitalist can defy this drive and still remain in business. It is the force that leads to periodic ups and downs of the business cycle and the anarchy of the capitalist system.

As part of this profit drive the capitalists attempt to squeeze as much out of workers as possible. They have no concern for the wear and tear on workers — erosion of health, contamination of their bodies, pollution of the workplace, and injuries — any more than they do for the environment as a whole. "Capitalist production," Marx explained in *Capital*, "develops technology . . . only by sapping the original sources of all the wealth — the soil and the laborer."

In our class-divided society, the framework of all politics from war to unemployment is the struggle between the producers and the exploiters, between working people and the capitalists.

Every gain by working people to increase our fighting ability and strengthen our position in relation to the capitalist exploiters puts us on a better footing to fight hazardous conditions on the job, on the farm, in our homes, and in our entire environment. And these advances help prepare us for building the massive revolutionary working-class movement that will be needed to overturn capitalist rule, which is a prerequisite to finally halting the destruction of our environment and cleaning up the mess the capitalists have left.

In the next issue I'll take up the struggle to protect the environment in countries where capitalist rule no longer exists.

Issues posed in debate on rights and child abuse

BY PETER THIERJUNG

The July 13 *Militant* editorial "An abuse of the Bill of Rights" stirred a debate among our readers. Some strongly objected to the stance of the editorial. Others raised questions of emphasis. In the July 27 issue we printed one of these letters and in the "Letters" column below we reprint several others.

The *Militant's* editorial protested the June 27 Supreme Court ruling that attacked the U.S. Constitution's Sixth

AS I SEE IT

Amendment right to confront one's accusers. It explained how the court used the widespread revulsion for the crime of child abuse to press its attack.

Judge Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the court, said that the right to confront one's accusers is important, but is not an "indispensable element" of the Sixth Amendment. The court's decision sanctioned taking trial testimony from child witnesses in abuse cases through closed-circuit television. It is "a method," the editorial said, "that allows the state to stage testimony and guts a defendant's right to cross-examine accusers."

Weighing the issues raised by the ruling and in the letters from our readers is important. It can help clarify for working people what methods help and hinder the fight for the protection of children against abuse. It also helps shed light on the ways the U.S. rulers attempt to use issues like child abuse to win support for their drive against democratic rights.

Women and children were relegated to less than human status with the rise of class society thousands of years ago. For hundreds of generations women and children have been treated as the property of the husband or father. Violent crimes within the family have generally been dismissed as "private matters" that do not concern society. As a result people usually turned their heads when a man beat his spouse or parents abused children.

LETTERS

Child abuse I

I enjoy reading the *Militant*. It gives me a radical viewpoint not often available from other sources.

I must strongly object to an absurd editorial in the July 13 issue, "An abuse of the Bill of Rights," which criticized the Supreme Court decision allowing testimony from child abuse victims to be presented on videotape.

The comments displayed a complete ignorance of the issue and an insensitivity to the rights, abilities, and needs of the victims. It encourages continuing an abusive process that occurs when a child is dragged through the criminal justice system, a system that is threatening enough to adults, let alone to children.

By exaggerating a political point of view, the writer has advocated further child abuse. This ignorance is inexcusable. Most children do not lie about child abuse. It is far more likely that a defense attorney will.

Thomas Greenman
Miramar, Florida

Child abuse II

The July 13 editorials, "An abuse of the Bill of Rights" and "Hypocrisy and child abuse," came to the right conclusions by way of some wrong reasons. They exposed the U.S. government's hypocrisy and took a correct stand against the June 27 U.S. Supreme Court decision.

Taking away the right to confront one's accuser in child abuse cases will make it easier for the ruling class to claim the need for further restrictions on democratic rights in other areas.

Increased child abuse is a symptom of the social disintegration the crisis of the capitalist economic system brings with it. For the capitalist class to take serious measures to protect children would go against the grain of the generalized assault on the oppressed and exploited.

Communists have always fought for special laws to protect children because they are targeted by capitalism for special victimization. Children are less able to protect themselves, need to be sheltered from adult responsibilities, and need education and nurturing to become

Social consciousness in the United States on these issues, however, has advanced as real gains for working people have been scored by the civil rights movement and the fight for women's rights since the 1960s and 1970s. Victories won, including a woman's right to abortion and affirmative action, provided a foundation on which violence against women and abuse of children began to emerge from the shadows.

The idea that society has an obligation to protect and improve the status of the most vulnerable, especially children, is now more widely accepted. This heightened social awareness has led to the strengthening of protective legislation for children. In 1979 the Federal Child Abuse Act was passed. It dramatically increased funds available to states and cities for agencies and programs to counter child abuse.

Today the U.S. rulers are manipulating genuine sentiment for further steps to protect children against injustice to attack democratic rights.

The Supreme Court ruling set several traps for working people by linking its swipe against the Bill of Rights with the issue of child abuse. Working people need to see these traps and separate appearances from reality.

On one hand, the ruling creates the appearance that a victory for the fight against child abuse has been scored; on the other hand, opposing the court's decision can appear to be insensitive at best to a child's ordeal when testifying about abuse, or at worst may seem an endorsement of the abuse imposed on children by the criminal "justice" system and unscrupulous lawyers. Neither are true.

The U.S. rulers' hypocrisy on child abuse was expressed in a February ruling by the Supreme Court. The case involved the brutal beating of four-year-old Joshua DeShaney. The boy sustained severe brain damage because his father was allowed to beat him repeatedly.

Joshua's mother sued Wisconsin authorities, charging that they had violated her son's constitutional rights by failing to protect him from his father's beatings. Many previous instances of the father's violent abuse of Joshua had been

reported by social workers, personnel in hospital emergency rooms, police, and neighbors. But authorities refused to act to prevent further harm to the boy.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Wisconsin authorities. The decision said that the constitution protects citizens against rights violations by the government, but does not apply in private acts between citizens. In other words, child abuse is a "private family matter" and children are not afforded the protection of law.

The Supreme Court decision in Joshua's case revealed the U.S. rulers' utter callousness toward abused children. It also shows the cynical nature of the court's June 27 ruling, which makes it easier for the government to continue its frame-ups against union militants and others who stand up for their rights.

Frame-ups rest on making charges stick without presenting evidence or facts to substantiate them. Often an important element in making a frame-up stick is denying defendants the right to confront their accusers.

Cops, prosecutors, and judges have demagogically raised the slogan "Believe the children!" to win convictions when evidence has been lacking. And as the letters from readers show, some genuine opponents of child abuse have been confused and disoriented by this campaign.

The issue is not whether children lie or tell the truth. Children, like the truth, can and have been manipulated by unscrupulous adults. The nub of the question is whether facts and evidence, which can include a child's testimony, should be required in legal proceedings to prove guilt beyond a shadow of doubt.

Rights and protections can never be secured by denying others their rights. Allowing ourselves to be taken in by such divide-and-rule tactics weakens everyone's fight for a better society.

The *Militant* editorial correctly concluded that limiting civil liberties denies working people the very weapons they need to defend themselves against a society that breeds crimes such as child abuse, and ultimately hampers our ability to change society itself.

happy, healthy, productive adults.

This is where the *Militant* editorials miss the point. They downplay the serious nature of child abuse today and create the impression that during the past decade many innocent adults have been framed up on phony child abuse charges. This is just not true.

Child abuse is very widespread. Most studies find that more than 20 percent of all women claim they were sexually abused at least once during childhood. Very rarely are abusers prosecuted and even more rarely are they convicted.

Since most abusers are family members, protecting the children is very difficult. They are reluctant to speak out due to shame, guilt, and terror.

The editorial scoffs at the idea that children's testimony should be believed. Most abused kids usually try to talk to an adult but usually the adult doesn't believe the child or won't face the situation.

The editorial also creates the impression that there is a cadre of professional frame-up artists waiting to prosecute innocent adults for sexual or physical abuse. What motive child welfare workers and psychologists have for the alleged frame-ups is not explained.

In a revolutionary society I would favor using special measures like closed-circuit TV testimony for children in some cases. In the United States today, supporting the Supreme Court ruling would be an error. It will make it easier to chip away at democratic rights and make it easier to frame up working-class fighters on phony child abuse charges, similar to the way Mark Curtis was framed up on a phony rape charge.

But it would be a mistake to believe, as the *Militant* implies, that the increased awareness and prosecution of child sexual and physical abuse is simply a frame-up exercise by the ruling class to convince people to accept new attacks on the Bill of Rights.

Rick Berman
Portland, Oregon

Child abuse III

When two adults face each other in a law court, they do so as equals.

When a child is in court, he or she has to face an institution that rigorously excludes children from judging, defending, prosecuting, serving on juries, or even visiting as spectators.

When a child faces an adult anywhere, they do so as unequal; but some situations are more unequal than others.

René Gimpel
London, England

Child abuse IV

The *Militant* editorial, "Hypocrisy and child abuse," should prove beyond any doubt that the U.S. government has little concern for the rights of children.

Readers will find a Pathfinder book by Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, useful in keeping these matters in revolutionary perspective. Engels clearly points out that a society founded on the private ownership of property is class divided with a wealthy possessing class exploiting the working masses, including children.

The state apparatus that enforces this rule of the rich is characterized by all kinds of inequalities. Engels writes about "male supremacy," the integral feature of the class system, that results in inequality for both women and children.

The "king of the castle," "sanctity of the home," "erosion of family values," and other slogans of the capitalist class have been largely successful in oppressing not only women but also children. For years the ruling class, supported by many churches, denounced child labor laws, and even after enactment of such laws, their state closes its eyes to hundreds of thousands of U.S. children who not only work in dangerous, unhealthy conditions, but who do not get an education because they are forced to work.

On Nov. 19, 1989, the United Nations adopted a Convention on the Rights of the Child. It contains 54 articles covering specific rights of children within a broad field of civil, economic, social, and cultural rights. One article prohibits capital punishment for offenses committed by persons under age 18.

The ratification process for this convention is under way. It is expected that the required 20 UN member states will have signed by the end of this year, marking the first time in world history that children have rights under international law.

President Bush has not signed the document, a requirement before it can be sent to the U.S. Senate for ratification.

A State Department official was quoted as saying, "One of the problems with these human rights treaties is that they assume involvement by the government in the lives of citizens is greater than we think is appropriate. The official noted the Convention requirement of day care for children of working parents and publicly funded health care for children as two areas of U.S. objection.

Unless pressure is brought on the president and Senate, this Convention will be added to an already long list of UN treaties the United States refuses to recognize.

Erling Sannes
Bismarck, North Dakota

Stand on ecology

I fear that some Marxists are so dedicated to the class struggle and so intent upon class analysis that all issues become subordinate to class questions.

Ecological destruction preceded capitalism (medieval forest clearing, for example) and, while certainly aggravated by capitalism, now threatens the earth on a mammoth scale not simply because of capitalism.

Certain dilemmas are attendant to industrial society no matter how that society is organized and no matter what the mode of production. The balance of ecology and economic development is ultimately a question of human judgment and decision, of priorities and values.

While the capitalist class has proven abysmally contemptuous of the environment, each one of us makes personal decisions about the environment as well. We decide to recycle or discard glass and metal, to use new or recycled paper, to drive to the store or walk.

A much larger portion of the responsibility for ecological problems

rests directly in the hands of the capitalist class. But merely to expose a few disasters or condemn capitalism is not enough. We must show that our own priorities are more responsible, that socialists will study ecological problems and will implement new methods of production and packaging that will stop unnecessary pollution.

It is conceivable to me that a socialist or communist society might still destroy the ecological system on this planet. The masses may opt for convenience and immediate gratification just as capitalists seek efficiency and profits. Overthrowing capitalism will not insure our survival, although I believe it to be a necessary step.

Can we not put more green in our red? Can the *Militant* possibly put one or more correspondents on the environment as a full-time assignment? Should not the environment be an integral component of the communist agenda, rather than simply a subordinate or trendy issue largely overlooked?

Will Wilkin
Willimantic, Connecticut

E. Europe coverage

The coverage in your paper of events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is in my opinion totally inadequate in relation to the importance of developments there. Rather than having reporters at the scene of the action, as you appear willing and able to do elsewhere, you seem to feel that it is sufficient for you to write treatises on Bolshevik history out of your New York office.

To take this kind of attitude toward such world-shaking events demonstrates a lack of political seriousness on your part. To be ignorant is a pity, to ignore is a shame.

Lev Vilich
New York, New York

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Pact creates break in police siege of Mohawk community in Québec

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTRÉAL — An agreement signed August 12 by representatives of the Mohawk nation and the Québec and Canadian federal governments has paved the way for negotiations to end the 32-day armed stand-off between Mohawks and the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), the Québec provincial police. The three-hour outdoor ceremony took place behind the Mohawk barricades at Kanesatake, a Native community next to the town of Oka 30 miles west of here.

The agreement accepts demands that have been put forward by the Mohawks for weeks, including "unimpeded access of food, clothing, medical supplies, health care, fuel, and

More on struggle of Canada's Native peoples on page 10.

the basic necessities of life to and from Kanesatake (Oka) and Kahnawake," another Mohawk community just across the St. Lawrence River from Montréal. It also stipulates that 24 observers chosen by the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights will attend the negotiations.

The formal agreement, written in Mohawk, French, and English, was signed in the name of the Mohawk communities of Kanesatake, Kahnawake, Akwesasne (that straddles the Ontario, U.S., and Québec borders), and Tyennanaga and the Six Nations in Ontario.

Mohawk leaders see the agreement as a significant victory. "We know in our hearts that what we have done is right," said Ellen Gabriel, spokesperson for the Mohawk negotiating team. "This agreement shows that."

On August 8 Canada's Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced the decision of the federal government to accept the request of the Québec government to replace the provincial SQ with the Canadian army at the cop barricades.

The army, with 4,400 troops and 1,400 vehicles at its disposal, remains on alert and ready to replace the SQ if the talks break down.

Racist mobs

These attacks have created the conditions for a reactionary mobilization against the Mohawks. Racists are using the inconvenience caused to workers by the closing of the commuter Mercier Bridge to Montréal — which runs through the Kahnawake Mohawk reservation — as a pretext to organize anti-Mohawk demonstrations demanding that the army carry out an armed assault to open the bridge.

On August 12, 35 people, including 16 cops, were injured when a racist mob tried to crash police barricades in Châteauguay just outside of Kahnawake. "It's about time the army move in to clear the scum off the bridge," ranted Châteauguay Member of Parliament Ricardo Lopez.

The next day 25 people were arrested after a confrontation between the mob and cops involving gasoline bombs and stones. Solidarity Châteauguay, the organization that has organized the racist actions, is led by a former SQ cop.

Background of crisis

The crisis began July 11 when hundreds of heavily armed tear-gas throwing and trigger-happy SQ cops invaded Kanesatake to tear down a barricade erected by the Mohawks. The Indians were trying to prevent the expansion of an Oka golf course onto Mohawk land. Armed members of the Mohawk Warrior Society pushed back this attack on their community. During the battle one cop was killed. In solidarity with Kanesatake Mohawks, those at Kahnawake occupied and closed the Mercier Bridge, a main commuter artery from the south shore of the St. Law-

rence River to the island of Montréal.

In an effort to crush the resistance, the SQ set up barricades sealing off Oka and Kahnawake from the outside world, restricting the flow of food, medical services, advisors, and other means of support for the Mohawks.

In response, Canada's 950,000 Native people began to mobilize from one end of the country to the other in support of the Kahnawake and Kanesatake Mohawks, erecting roadblocks and raising their own land claims.

The pressure has forced the government of the province of British Columbia to do an about-face and reverse its 117-year old policy of refusing to negotiate land claims with the Native people of that province.

The struggle of Canada's Native people against discrimination and appalling deprivation and poverty has won broad support among working people in Canada and around the world.

During his current 10-day visit to Canada, anti-apartheid fighter Desmond Tutu of South Africa called on the Canadian government to respond to the demands of Native people. Polls show a majority of Québécois support Native land claims.

To this date the determination of the Mohawks, their unity, and the broad support they have won, have kept the racists isolated and prevented the army from moving in. Lieutenant-General Kent Foster, commander of the Mobile Command threatening the Mohawks, said in a news conference August 9 that an armed attack by soldiers "would not, in my professional opinion, be a good idea." He said the consequences would be "unthinkable." The same day, the Québec government announced that it will spend another \$12.5 mil-



Participants at July 29 rally in Oka, Québec, supported besieged Mohawks of nearby Kanesatake community.

lion to help alleviate traffic problems caused by the blockade of the Mercier Bridge.

Michel Dugré, a member of the United Steelworkers of America and the Communist League candidate for mayor of Montréal, warned in an August 13 statement, "we cannot let our guard down even though the federal and provincial governments have been forced to sign an initial agreement with

the Mohawks."

"These governments represent the ruling rich. When their interests are threatened by oppressed people struggling for their rights they have one basic response — force — whether it is sending destroyers against the oppressed Arab peoples in the Persian Gulf or the army and the cops against Native people in this country."

British media hits Int'l Miners' Organisation

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — The International Miners' Organisation (IMO) has been made a special target by the media here. Writing in the July 21 *Financial Times*, labor editor John Gapper pinpointed the undermining of the IMO's viability as one of two key goals of the current attack on Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield, leaders of the IMO and the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain. The other was Scargill's "future as president" of the international organization.

The slander campaign against the mine union leaders was initiated by the *Daily Mirror* in March. The tabloid began by alleging that NUM officials Scargill and Heathfield had used funds raised during the 1984-85 national coal strike for their personal use.

When a union-commissioned inquiry by attorney Gavin Lightman cleared them of these charges, the slander campaign shifted its axis. It is now alleged that they channeled £1.4 million (US\$2.56 million) to the IMO, money supposedly destined for the NUM.

The IMO was established at a congress in Paris in September 1985, six months after the end of the miners' strike in Britain. Prior to its formation, miners' unions had been divided internationally between those affiliated to the Independent Confederation of Free Trade Unions based in Brussels, Belgium, and the World Federation of Trade Unions in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

The idea for a united mine workers' international union federation has existed since the 1960s. It took the British miners' strike of 1984-85 to bring it about. Miners around the world spearheaded international solidarity with the strike. At the same time, the British government was able to weaken the strike by importing coal, especially from the United States, South Africa, and Poland. Countermeasures were taken to strengthen international solidarity, which led to the establishment of the IMO.

The NUM played a prominent role in establishing the organization. One of the union's earliest contributions was to help the fledgling miners' union of South Africa, which took the name National Union of Mineworkers after its British counterpart.

In addition to direct assistance the IMO has given the South African NUM, it has also extended solidarity and aid to Namibian mine workers.

Miners in Britain have received huge financial assistance from the IMO. Nearly £1 million (\$1.8 million) was sent from the IMO to aid miners in Britain suffering hardship and victimization following the 1984-85 strike.

Last year the IMO organized solidarity with striking miners in the Soviet Union and sent some £20,000 to aid the Phosphate

Workers Union of Morocco in its two-month strike at the state-owned Djirada mine.

Today the IMO organizes 43 mining unions, representing 6 million workers from 39 different countries. Its general secretary is Alain Simon from the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) in France.

The IMO has held two congresses and two broader conferences. Its second congress held in Cairo, Egypt, in November 1989 was hosted by the General Egyptian Mine and Quarry Union. A special theme of the congress was the fight against multinational corporations. Jairo Coteiro of the National Mine and Metalworkers' Federation of Colombia, Jan Antiao of the Chile Mining Confederation, and Rafael Caceres Aguilar from Nicaragua presented the Latin American experience.

Curtis sends support message to Scargill, Heathfield

The following solidarity statement was recently sent by Mark Curtis to National Union of Mineworkers President Arthur Scargill and the NUM's general secretary, Peter Heathfield. Curtis is a framed-up trade unionist and political activist serving 25 years in an Iowa prison.

I believe that you are being attacked in the courts and in the big-business news media because of your fighting leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers. Your real crime was to stand firm at the head of the 1984-85 coal miners' strike and to take necessary action to protect the membership's financial assets.

The government, media, courts, and their lackeys are trying to crucify you as an example to the working class of Britain, America, and the world. They tried to take the

union's money, and when they failed, they now go after the leadership.

Workers everywhere should stand with the NUM in defending you. From Britain to South Africa to the United States, we should demand that the Margaret Thatcher government keep its hands off our men.

I was framed up on rape and burglary charges for my union activities in defense of immigrant workers in Des Moines, Iowa. I am writing this from prison, where they'd like to put Peter and Arthur. From my own experience I know that it takes an international defense campaign to push these "legal" attacks back.

Best of luck to the NUM, Women Against Pit Closures, Justice for Mineworkers, and to yourselves, Peter and Arthur. Stay strong. We will win!